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VIBRATIONS.

BY ANTHONY FRETTEPLACE.

IN the disused mill-leet the waters slept oily and polished under the sun, for the sluices were closed ; but nearby the river moved hoarsely over its bed. The oppression of a hot day in June lay over everything, and the green gorge, brimmed with its larch woods, which climbed steeply up on both sides, was a frame for an almost intolerable blueness of unclouded sky. The noise of the river was the only sound, except once, when a farmcart lumbered and creaked down the hill, slowly crossed the bridge, and as slowly climbed to the plateau on the opposite side between the bright green steeples of the larch trees. After that the afternoon was as silent as before.

Presently Francis Wyaston moved from the window, where he had been sitting for some time idly examining a book of flies, walked over to the table, and picking up a volume of the collected poems of John Ford, turned over the pages, and presently said :

‘ A fine piece of work, though rather disturbing, don’t you think, in some ways—you know him well, I take it, John. Is he writing much now ? I don’t know of any modern poet, who seems more oppressed with what one might call the secret strangeness of commonplace things.’

Shiplake answered consideringly. ‘ Yes, I know him well. You’re quite right about his work. No, he’s writing nothing. I don’t know if he ever will again. I suppose the urge is gone, at any rate for the moment ; but then, he’s

had some very strange experiences during the last few years.'

Something in the slowness and pregnancy of our host's words gave me for a moment that curious feeling of something foreboded, which a measured and mysterious utterance so often produces on the mind. Francis Wyaston must have felt the same thing, for he put down the book with an unconsciously exaggerated stillness of movement, and sitting down, looked questioningly at his friend.

For a few moments Shiplake said nothing more ; but his face wore an expression grave and rather baffling, and as though he debated inwardly the question of how far it might be wise to explain his earlier remark. Presently he moved uneasily in his chair, leaned over the table and took a cigar from a box, which lay on it ; then abruptly changing his mind, he replaced the cigar, and closed the box. Afterwards with an unusual gravity he began to speak.

'Perhaps,' he said, 'I ought not to have made the remark I did a few moments ago ; but you took me rather unawares, Francis, and I answered before I thought. Now I suppose I had better tell you. After all, why shouldn't I? No confidence has been involved, and so no confidence will be broken. The only difficulty lies in the fact that what I shall say is, frankly, rather incredible ; but I shall not ask you to believe it. I shall merely ask you, if you wish, to imagine that something, some quality of the day, of the landscape, of a mood not often experienced—one or all of these—met me and influenced me on—well, more than one occasion.

'Perhaps I never told you, but I have known Ford for the greater part of my life, and known him intimately. We were at our preparatory school together ; then our ways separated for a time ; I went to Winchester, he developed some delicacy of health or other, and had a tutor ; but at

Cambridge we met again. Our rooms were in the same court at John's, and we were together as much as two hard-reading men could afford the time to be. You know what he's like, of course ; his portraits are common property now, and have appeared in most of the illustrated papers with some regularity—the long face, the beaked nose, the mouth (as one would expect from his character) firm and good humoured—and then (portraits don't always show this) eyes of an extraordinary wistful, puzzled, questioning look, as though, for all his wisdom, he found life and human experience baffling problems never even half resolved. We all do, of course, but the realisation of it doesn't live with us all the time. But with him it did—or at all events until a time just five years ago, when his outlook—how shall I put it?—suffered an abrupt change.

'Twice before his family had produced a poet—first Shakespeare's contemporary, the John Ford of the "melancholy hat"—next a man of less note, though in some ways, to my mind, more noteworthy—an Edmund Ford, whose muse was, so to speak, clubbed to death by Lockhart in the early eighteen hundreds. He was a close friend of Keats and Leigh Hunt, and suffered with them in the notorious attacks on the "Cockney School." But they were, in some ways at any rate, of sterner stuff than he, and, as everyone knows, calmly went on writing, unmoved and but a little perturbed, in spite of Byron's libellous statement to the contrary ; while poor Edmund Ford never published another stanza. He retired to the family estate in Peevor, became his father's bailiff, and in due course inherited. Whether he wrote anything more nobody knows, and in general nobody ever has known ; but it seems he kept in touch even after Keats's death with the forlorn remnants of his early circle. Armitage-Brown in particular between 1832 and 1841, when he

finally went into exile, stayed with him many times at Oviatt, hunted indefatigably with the Peevor, and in spite of his spectacled short-sightedness, gained a reputation for having been more times in at the death than even the indigenous and hard-riding squires of the period. One wonders what the talk of these two ageing and rather pathetic men must have been, over their port of an evening, after a hard day's hunting. It must often have turned to the memory of the man they had both loved, now dead and buried in a far country, and to the days when all had been young and hopeful and enthusiastic together.

'As time went on Ford developed two passions in life. He became the keenest hunter of his day and one of the early Masters of the Peevor ; and he developed a profound hatred of women, his wife having betrayed him under peculiarly heartless circumstances. He is remembered to-day, if at all, for four things : for his exquisite, if unequal verse ; for having created a mild scandal by thrashing his wife's paramour within an inch of his life ; for having emptied with impunity a glass of wine in the face of Lockhart, his ancient enemy ; and for the masterly though eccentric monograph written on him a few years ago by his descendant.

'But I must return to the second John Ford and third in the line of poets. Reputation came early to him. Even before he went down he had made some slight stir with his monograph, which—and this is perhaps a strange thing in so young a man—represented what was for long his deepest interest in life, I had almost said obsession—the inconclusive career of this odd ancestor of his. When the preoccupation first came to him I don't know, but I think it dated from very early years. One day shortly before we went down he spoke of it in a way that impressed me very strongly.

We had been, I think, to an organ recital at Kings—it was on a May evening. I remember that very distinctly, because the cockchafers were a little too active for our comfort, continually blundering against our faces and droning through the air, making that eerie noise of theirs. It was just as we were passing under the gateway of our own court that he began to speak, and he continued his talk in my rooms, as we sat and brewed coffee—it was the age of patent coffee-makers, you may remember.

‘After awhile he began to speak of Keats’s particular devotion to the memory of Shakespeare, and his only half-whimsical suggestion that that poet of an earlier age was nothing less than his own particular and tutelary genius. Ford turned the passage up, I remember, and showed it me in the *Life and Letters*. Then he rather surprised me by saying after a long pause and with great suddenness : “Do you know, Shiplake, you may think it the most absurd superstition on my part, but sometimes—” he hesitated for a moment, like a man on the verge of making an indiscreet confidence—“sometimes I *have* thought that my own ancestor, poor inconclusive, hag-ridden Edmund Ford might be my——” He hesitated again for a moment or two, leaving his sentence unfinished, then began another. “No,” he said, “I won’t be so asinine as to suggest that he might be my own tutelary genius ; but he’s always at the back of my mind in a queer and rather uncomfortable fashion, as though the mere memory of him were directing my thoughts and interests and even forcing me along certain lines of study. Once or twice I’ve waked up suddenly at night with the idea—I suppose from some interrupted dream—that he was in the room with me. It wasn’t pleasant, I can assure you. Of course you know, or perhaps you don’t, that he was here at John’s from 1810 until 1814, but in which of the

courts he roomed I don't think anyone knows—though I've heard it said it was in *this* court."

'For some time longer we talked in a rather constrained manner of this eccentric ancestor of my friend; but the conversation was uneasy and soon died; in fact, with the odd impishness of unbidden thoughts, the idea afterwards came to me that we had ceased talking of him with the abruptness of two people, who perceive that the subject of their discussion has entered the house—a thought as inconsequent and foolish as are most of the pseudo-occult thoughts that enter one's mind in such a connection.

'Then for a little time we sat and drank our coffee in silence; till at last Ford left me and made his way to his own rooms on the other side of the court.

'I felt strangely restless after he had gone, though for no reason that I could seriously have offered to my mind. As soon as I was left alone, I flung up the window and looked out. Distinctly through the windless May night my visitor's footsteps came to me from the other side of the court—echoing hollowly under the archway leading to his staircase, then borne more faintly, as he could be heard slowly mounting the steps to his room. Absolute silence followed, through which I could still hear the occasional drone of the cockchafer, busy even at this late hour over their mindless and erratic flights. Then I heard the clock of Great Saint Mary's chime half-past eleven.

'As I stood there leaning out into the almost midnight silence of the small country town, I gradually became aware of a sensation familiar to many midnight watchers—the feeling that somewhere near at hand (whether in the wide night outside or in the room behind me I did not know) there existed something, sentient or semi-sentient, that had known human experiences, and for all I knew, might still

know them. It was probably no more than the unconscious personification, on the part of the mind, of the sum total of all the human emotions subsisting in the crowded and wakeful night. At all events, as such feelings generally are, it was disturbing. Great Saint Mary's had struck five before at last I went to sleep—to sleep, indeed, fitfully with intervals of nightmare and semi-consciousness.

‘Two months afterwards we went down. There is something almost solemn, and, in one sense, of the true essence of pathos, in the thought of the break, the discontinuity, which such simple and artificial happenings make in the lives of men. Twenty or more acquaintances of the same year, more or less intimate, constantly meeting one another, whose personalities are of the very furniture, so to speak, of each others' minds, are suddenly separated by an event, which affects them all equally. How many friendships will survive it ; how many, indeed, of those who have so frequently met during the past four years, will ever meet again ? Regarded in that way, there is something almost terrifying in these separations, casually met, casually perceived, as they are ; something in the thought of all the loose ends of human experience—the relationships that lead nowhere and end in nothing—that may well fill the mind with a painful sense of futility. All of which may be summed up in the commonplace phrase, “two months later we went down.” Five years passed before I met Ford again.

‘During that time abrupt and contradictory things had happened to him. Much against his will and deeply to his regret for what he afterwards described to me as his craven compliance, he had yielded to the wishes (or commands) of his parents, and had joined the diplomatic service.

‘It had been his wish to live quietly in the country, to

write, to study, and (though he would not, himself, have made use of the word) to meditate. That was not to be. "Members of the leisured classes," said his father, booming after his custom, and with his hands beneath his coat-tails, "must justify their existence,"—presumably, one would imagine, by a life, which, at all events for the junior members of the service, was the complete negation of all leisure. "Lotus-eating in the country," his father continued, was not for such as he. There was work to be done in the world. Ford sighed, made his gesture of "craven compliance," and did it. The lotuses, whatever those strange members of the vegetable kingdom might be, remained uneaten and even untasted.

'At the end of five years his father abruptly died after a sharp attack of influenza; and his mother, who during an ineffective life had followed her husband's lead blindly and in everything, followed it once more in the only decisive action of a lifetime, and died too, after an interval of only five weeks.

'I do not know whether Ford grieved for them. As he never once mentioned his parents to me except in the vaguest and most general terms, I am rather inclined to believe that he did not. Indeed, from what I knew from other sources of their coldness to him as a child, it would have been strange if he had; but on their death he acted quickly. He resigned, left Jugo-Slavia, and retired to his family's place in Eastern Peevor, and there began a five-years-deferred apprenticeship to what his father was no longer able to call lotus-eating. Actually he worked very hard. Within six months he had published his first volume of poems, and done much to found that astonishing reputation which he has carried with such modesty.

'During that six months I saw a good deal of him—

several times in town and three times for the inside of a week at his strange, tall, forlorn-looking house of Shocklach-Oviatt, which stood on a small eminence overlooking the rather melancholy stretches of the Peevor Flats. Far away over the plain one could see the line of the North Welsh Mountains, intensely blue and looking like a wall, and to the east nothing but the broad levels of the plain.

‘The immediate neighbourhood was agricultural ; but at night and in clear weather, when there was no moon, the eye looking towards the eastern horizon could catch the distant glow and shudder of furnaces ; and faintly on windless nights would come to the ear a dull, scarcely heard mutter like the mutter of a distant storm, very faint and remote. Listening intently, one received the impression that it was slowly creeping nearer.

‘I remember vividly the second evening of my first visit to Oviatt. The time was early August, the weather very hot, clear and breathless. After dinner we took our cigars out on to the terrace, which ran below the dining-room windows, and overlooked a lawn, the sunk garden and a line of tall elms bordering the park. For a long time we walked up and down, talking at first of his work then nearing completion, afterwards of things remoter in time—of our days at Cambridge, of the long vacations we had spent together, sometimes abroad, sometimes at Oviatt, often in Southaughmondshire with my parents. We talked for so long, pacing up and down, looking with preoccupied eyes over the slowly darkening landscape, that almost before we had noticed it, night had fallen. Presently in the clearness of that hot, dark atmosphere the reddish constellations of the furnaces began to show themselves upon the horizon. As though by a tacit accord we ceased our conversation and looked at them. Then Ford spoke again, but in a tone and

with an emphasis strangely different from those of a few moments ago.

“Listen,” he said. “You hear that constant queer murmur coming from that inferno of industry over there. It’s almost as though it were threatening our quiet agricultural country. Always threatening. I hate it so much, that, when there’s no wind and I can hear it all day, I often feel that I’d willingly sell up, let the estate go, clear out of here—anything to get away from its voice, if it weren’t for the fact that it would be a sort of disloyalty to my ancestors. You see, we’ve been here so long—never of much importance in the world—none of us have set the Oviatt brook on fire, much less the Thames—still we’ve been here.”

‘I looked at him. We had walked round the corner of the house, and light from the uncurtained windows of the library fell on his face illuminating it sharply. What I saw there for a moment disturbed me. It was the face of one on the verge of a nervous breakdown; the whole expression was of almost unbearable strain, and suggested to my mind the concrete image of something stressed to breaking-point, that might presently snap with a loud ringing noise.

‘The image was almost intolerably vivid.

“Do you think you’re living too much alone?” I asked, with a banal attempt to seek the superficially obvious reason for a most unobvious mood.

“Probably,” he answered; then suddenly put his hand on my arm. “No,” he continued, contradicting himself. “I don’t think that is the reason; or at least, it’s not the proximate one. Do you remember that rather dreadful description of the smell of metal in ‘Hyperion’—when the Titan sits in his hall before that final downfall, and one by one all the omens come to him?”

‘I nodded, and after a pause he went on, while the far noises came to us out of the east in a continuous mutter of dull sound. As I listened to them I could hear the chuckle of the Oviatt brook ; a sheep coughed in one of the farther meadows, and from the line of elms by the ha-ha a little owl mewed like a cat, but behind everything, interpenetrating everything, was this unchanging, muttered obligato of machinery.

“‘It’s completely absurd,” he went on, “but the idea of the odour of hot metal has taken hold of my mind. I suppose it’s with constantly *smelling* their horrible activities as well as *hearing* them.” He pointed to the horizon. “Those lines in ‘Hyperion’ are constantly in my head—echoing there—and always with them the idea of what they meant. But now I’m talking like a fool. That’s the unfair thing about these waking nightmares born of overwork. The moment one attempts to put them into words, they sound like nothing but the most abject hysteria.”

‘I threw the butt of my cigar under a laurestinus bush, trying to sense, as it were, the quality of the air coming so soundlessly towards us out of the eastward darkness. It might have been my imagination—the distance was great for an odour to travel—but the air coming to me seemed for a moment to be ever so slightly tainted with the smell of scorching brass. Then my mind flew to the lines in ‘Hyperion.’ I remembered that in his now-famous monograph Ford had mentioned finding a first suggestion of them in a letter from his ancestor to Keats, and had drawn the conclusion that the better-known poet was indebted to this nearly forgotten eccentric for one of his finest images. It was strange, I told myself, that any disturbing impression, which came to me in connection with Ford, should be connected also, and in every case, with his overmastering

interest—the life of that earlier Ford. Now I was convinced that I knew the reason. He had plainly been dangerously overworking, and the habitual bent of his mind, now become a preoccupation, was subtly communicated to mine.

‘I took his arm. “You’ll have to give ancestor Edmund the go-by for awhile,” I said, “and take a thorough holiday.”

‘Ford started, exactly as a man might, whose companion had unwittingly touched upon a carefully hidden and disturbing secret. Then he laughed.

“‘I’m afraid I can’t,” he said with the most transparent assumption of lightness. “He’s here, and won’t be shifted. No, I don’t mean poor Edmund himself, but my wearisome research on his life and letters—and yet in a sense not wearisome—for every available fact and detail connected with him haunts me like a ghost, as I suppose every man of research must be haunted, who buries himself in his subject. And then there’s my own work in poetry. I can’t keep him out of that. A veritable King Charles’s Head. I have a feeling, as I told you years ago, that one day I shall just cease to be interested in him, or that I shall suddenly dislike his not very likeable character, and when that day comes, whatever powers of writing I may have will simply snuff out like a candle flame. Meanwhile between one thing and another he’s become a positive old man of the sea.”

““Then,” I said, “since Edmund won’t leave you, you must leave Oviatt for awhile. Go away for a holiday, anywhere, a voyage for preference—you can’t be very much alone on a voyage. I’ll come with you, if you’d like me to.”

‘Late in the following autumn, taking my advice, Ford went on a cruise to the South Atlantic. At the last moment I was unable to go with him. All that autumn my father was ill, and did not reach convalescence till well into the new year. Ford was thus, and as it proved, disastrously, left to

his own devices. To the surprise of all his acquaintances he returned with a wife. I, perhaps, was less surprised than others. After the loneliness of his preoccupied life at Oviatt it was perhaps not unnatural that in the interest of a voyage and the company of strangers his thoughts should turn to marriage. What was strange and very strange was his portentous choice in wives ;—though even that, on consideration, seemed less astonishing than it first appeared. He was lonely, he was suffering from the effects of overwork, and probably also of years of uncongenial work in a foreign country ;—and the girl was undeniably beautiful.

‘ The source of her good looks was an unsolved mystery ; possibly they came from the distaff side, though existing photographs of her unspeakable mother would scarcely seem to bear that out. Her father, who accompanied her on the boat, together with her three sisters, was that fortunately very rare thing, the unworthy priest ;—a dreadful dubious clergyman with a heavy red moustache, a loud voice, and a taste in anecdote as dubious as his credentials—a roaring, drinking creature, whom rumour variously declared to be unfrocked, suspended, or merely prudently retired, according as rumour was extravagantly malicious or only impish. He was to a large extent shunned on board, both by the better sort, who disapproved of him, and by the worse, who disliked him. There can be little doubt that he instructed his daughter to entrap Ford merely for the sake of his money and his snug estate ; and, incredible as it may seem, the girl succeeded. I think her success was largely due to the fact that she looked two things that she very emphatically was not—at once spiritual and elvish ; also, probably she was exceptionally well coached by her father. Later, when his influence had been withdrawn, the intelligence she must at one time have shown appeared to vanish. I, at all events, saw nothing of

it. Whatever the combination of qualities which vanquished him, poor Ford was helpless against it ; and I would certainly have defied anyone, looking at the girl, to have believed that her mind was as undistinguished as a Lincolnshire coastline, and about as arid.

‘ I think I was their first acquaintance to visit them after their marriage. The experience was one I try not to remember ; it was the reverse of pleasant ; but I must tell you, reluctantly enough, something of that visit, for it has considerable bearing on the story. I do not know whether this woman at the time of her marriage intended, as the saying goes, to “ play fair and run a straight course.” I very much doubt it. I think, rather, that she intended to do as she liked, and counted on her native cunning to avoid detection. By faithfulness she had everything to gain, or rather to keep—a large income, an unassailable position, a secure future ; but she was self-confident, and much less astute than she imagined, and (poor fool) whatever dangers she might have conceived that the future held, she could never have envisaged—I doubt if anyone could—that THING, which in the unpredictable courses of life was to come upon her and catch her.

‘ It is, however, with my visits to Oviatt during the two years of their marriage, that I must deal now. As soon as I reached the place early in March I was sharply though obscurely aware that something was wrong with Oviatt. I had never liked the house, though in a sense it fascinated me. It was too tall, too gaunt, too watchful, and the round upper windows under the pediment of its Queen Anne façade looked like sly, vigilant eyes. This time I disliked it more than ever, and in a curious way I feared it, or perhaps I should say not IT, but some new atmosphere, which seemed to pervade its rooms, its tall grey-painted passages, and even

the walls themselves. The human elements in the place seemed outwardly harmonious enough, though I thought I could detect signs of strain and unhappiness behind the careful façade of their manner ; but behind all these, and shortly, I felt, to interpenetrate them, was the inhuman brooding of the house. There was a feeling of strain about the place ; a feeling of hushed antagonism, of an antagonism that held its breath in a fury of aversion. I could almost feel it in the still strained air of those grey passages that were too narrow and too tall. Even the furniture—(this was pure illusion on the part of the unreasoning portion of my brain)—even the furniture looked unnaturally rigid and hard, and as though presently, like a table at a spiritualistic séance, it might let out a torrent of sharp cracks like pistol shots. But the furniture remained silent. It was almost as though something, which had not been in the house before, or at most had been merely implicit there, now lurked in it almost openly and with abandon, and from dusky corners, forgotten cupboards, the next landing of the staircase just out of sight, directed the invisible beam of its intense aversion upon one or other of the house's inmates.

‘I am not likely to forget that first visit early in the March of ’thirty-two. Ford sent a car to meet me at the station, and during the two and a half mile drive I had plenty of time to wonder with some uneasiness what experiences might lie before me. During the whole of my journey from Southaughmondshire I had been ill at ease. As I frankly admitted to myself, I was most unwilling to go to Oviatt. Had I not feared that to have refused Ford’s invitation at such a time might have been only too rightly construed, I would never have gone. I realised that my position there might be one of more than difficulty. If, as I was almost certain I should, I found myself disliking his wife,

I must walk warily both with her and with Ford. Neither must guess my feelings. How many friendships, I reflected, must have been wrecked by the aversion of a man towards his friend's wife. That must not happen in my case. Better still, I must try hard to like her. From all accounts I feared I might find her both vulgar and tiresome—that combination of the bore and the coquette so peculiarly unpleasant in a hostess. But I must not think of that ; if she could make Ford happy, then all good fortune to her.

‘The country, as I passed through it, struck me as more beautiful and more unfriendly than ever. The horizon with its toothed and pinnaced tumble of mountains was intensely translucently blue ; and there was a roaring wind aloft.

‘Presently the car ran through the lodge gates, up the drive between its avenue of oak trees ; and I was faced with the difficulties I had so much dreaded throughout the whole of my journey. My visit was even more unpleasant than I had feared.

Of Ford I gained the impression (though there was nothing in his manner which should have given it me) of a man who had taken an impulsive step under the stress of overmastering infatuation, and was now, though still infatuated, vaguely disturbed by his own action. I wondered, too, if the girl were ill at ease ; she talked far too much and in a voice unpleasantly shrill, and her only form of conversation was to subject one to a fusillade of questions of the most extreme fatuousness. She stated no facts ; she merely asked for information :—“ was I going to Scotland for the autumn ? ” —“ had I been to Switzerland for the winter sports ? ” —“ did I not think the gulf of Spezia a ‘ romantic ’ place ? ” (she had apparently stayed there once for two days). I believe she even asked me if I did not consider Shelley a “ romantic ” poet.

‘ At first I imagined that this pelting of me with questions, as a man might pelt his fellows with confetti at a carnival, was for a similar reason. She was no doubt excited ; her good fortune in having successfully brought off such a marriage might well go to her head, and her excitement would show itself in this spate of words. Then, half-way through dinner, I happened quite by chance to see her eyes. I was conscious of a strange shock. They were the eyes of a being almost demented with fear ; the pupils dark and dilated, so that they almost drowned the irises ; their gaze poignant with an unceasing terror.

‘ Then I noticed that her hands trembled continuously, and, later, that she was afraid to be left alone for an instant. When there were no other guests in the house, wherever Ford and I happened to be, even if we were only away for a few moments, there she would presently appear. Scarcely an evening passed on which she did not contrive that neighbours should come in and remain as late as possible. She appeared to be consumed with a terrible apprehension—an apprehension of being left alone with—her own thoughts ? No, I decided—with something at once more and less tangible than those. I had not been at Oviatt for more than a day or two before I was aware that it was the house. Something in it (as I have said before) directed upon her a shuddering and conscious aversion, and this power was acutely, sensitively directional. Yet I was aware, though very obscurely aware, that this force, this concentrated loathing, aimed like an arrow at one person and one only, was in some way familiar to me ; that I had known it for a long time, and that its normal attitude towards humanity in general was far from malignant. But whatever it might be, I was utterly convinced that it would push this girl out of Oviatt with something of the same blind certitude with

which a cuckoo will push an egg out of a hedge-sparrow's nest. She would be evicted, crowded out of the house, out of all this material comfort into which she had so intelligently climbed.

'It was some five days after my arrival that a rather curious crisis was reached. Day had succeeded day, of a hard, cold brightness with something adamantine and polished about it. Large blown masses of cumulus cloud had passed whitely across the sky, giving to the land below them those violent changes of colour so characteristic of a northern spring, and which seem to possess a quality at once savage and subtle ;—and the tearing wind never ceased, never mitigated, but blew night and day. In the end it rasped the nerves of all who heard it, till they were sharp and edged like abraded metal.

'That day I had driven out to the Beckfortons, and had spent the whole afternoon walking over their wide expanses of heather, clambering up and down the innumerable gulleys, arretes and occasional chimneys, which, from a climber's point of view, pleasantly varied the green western slopes. I had found even in the modest eight hundred feet, which was all they could offer, some pretty problems ; and forgetting Oviatt for the time, I had enjoyed my afternoon thoroughly. But, driving homeward, the cloud of uneasiness came back ; I found myself dreading the strained atmosphere of the house, and hoping that once more guests would come in to relieve it.

'That evening two people joined us at dinner ; Giles Wenlock and his wife, and in their pleasant way made the conversation almost genial. The wind still roared outside ; the elms by the ha-ha creaked, groaned and swayed their branches about with a frantic abandon, that looked and sounded like the abandon of terror. Over coffee the con-

versation ranged widely ; philosophy came in for its share of attention ; and Giles, who among his many pleasant characteristics had that of making ideas creep out of their metaphysical lairs like robbers out of a treasure cave, began to speak lightly and humorously of that most unhumorous thing, Solipsism. According to him, the latest phase of this austere philosophy was the belief that the universe was a species of lucky-bag of vibrations. Vibrations ruled it ; nothing existed but vibrations, and the human brain unconsciously selected, edited, interpreted them, and provided itself with its own common illusion of life. On this unpromising subject he contrived to be very amusing, and it was not till some half-hour afterwards that the underlying horror of the conception touched me, and seemed to become one with the raging wind outside, the strained faces of our host and hostess, and the dark spaces of the room above and beyond the area of candle light. The library in which we were sitting was long, and its walls were almost completely obscured with books. The tooled bindings on the nearer shelves shone or glimmered as the candle-flames burnt steadily or wavered in obedience to gentle movements of air. Presently the room at its occupied end began to be faintly veiled with tobacco smoke, which moved aimlessly in whorls and spirals and waves, all heaving like a lazy ocean swell on a calm day.

‘ It was perhaps that, as well as our previous conversation, which turned my attention irresistibly to the idea of vibrations. This idea was curiously repugnant to me, and in a strange sense suffocating, like the feeling of breathlessness, which many persons experience in tunnels and caves and in listening to great music. Conversation had died ; Wenlock was puffing at his cigar ; his wife, who had brought her knitting, was busily engaged, and the click of her needles was

almost the only sound inside the room. They were the two people patently and utterly at ease. Ford's face looked strained and unhappy ; his wife's I could not see, but, remembering that glimpse of the earlier evening, I could imagine it. Personally, though I disliked her, I was intensely sorry for her. For a moment she was no longer the cunning interloper to be resented, but only a fellow being, who was going to suffer, and suffer perhaps with an intensity to which most of us have always, and fortunately, been strangers. Then, gradually, in this long pause of the conversation, as I looked round, I was aware of some invisible and soundless commotion in the atmosphere of the room, of waves and spirals of something, whose nature was incommunicable, but which were analogous on another plane to the spirals of smoke trailing and heaving about the room. Though I could see nothing, I felt that the atmosphere was obscurely thickening, pushing in waves of ever-decreasing length and ever-increasing denseness all together in a sickening advance, and all converging like the rays of heat from a curved mirror towards one corner of the room, the corner where Ford's wife, a vague form in the dimness just outside the candle light, half lay in her chair. Swiftly, now, this thickening of the atmosphere reached its climax. The room became unbearable to me. I was surprised that these two calm people, the one smoking, the other knitting, so quietly on either side of me, should apparently feel nothing of it. Then just as the empty space about me seemed to become almost solid with menace, the horror passed. The atmosphere was again calm and unstrained ; I could distinguish once more the scents of tobacco and flowers, which for the last few moments had been unapparent to me ; but the woman in the chair gave a little cry, a gasp of pain or terror, and then, with no more sound, fainted. That was all—in a

sense an anticlimax—if one would regard it so—or in another sense, and to another order of perception, a warning, like the first onset of a dread malady, or the first rumble of a storm, which shall presently hold the night in terror. No one but myself and the woman, who had been the object of its advance, had felt anything of the oncoming of this thing, which had stretched her unconscious in her chair.

‘I do not think that, for some time at all events, she said anything of her experience to Ford. That she recognised its significance I have little doubt, for two days afterwards, she suddenly remarked to me with no preamble, “This house loathes me,” thus showing that in part, though not wholly, she understood the nature of what she had undergone ; but I am convinced, too, that if she recognised it as a challenge, she accepted it as such—accepted and defied it, and that, though terror still remained, it was forced resolutely to the back of her consciousness. I believe that with the first definite attack of this force, psychic, electrical, whatever it might be (if, indeed, it existed at all outside my own brain and that of this terrified woman), there was born in her, like an antitoxin, a hardy tough-fibred resistance, which had before been absent.

‘When a few seconds later she opened her eyes, to my astonishment, she made light of her fainting attack, refused to go to bed, and refused to hear of our guests taking their departure ; but I noticed that, with the self-deceptive readiness of the frightened to seize on and cling to something utterly unessential and valueless, she had all the electric lights put on, as though their presence could help her. But there was no second attack that night, nor indeed, for many weeks to come.

‘One other thing, perhaps of no importance, I remember, and it is, so to speak, immovably connected with one

particular moment and one only—the moment at which that strange oppression of the atmosphere ceased. A series of words, a quotation in fact, now well known to most people, but long forgotten by me, suddenly entered my mind and remained there an unwelcome tenant. “When among men,” the quotation ran, “I have no angry thoughts, no malice, . . . I am free to speak ; when I am among women I have angry thoughts, malice, spleen ; I cannot speak . . . I am full of suspicion ; I am impatient to be gone.” It was, as you of course know, a quotation from the letters to Keats of the mysterious Edmund Ford.

‘The words remained with me almost with the force of direct and present speech all that evening and most of the next day ; they echoed in my mind and refused to be banished. I seemed almost to hear the actual tones of a voice, which constantly repeated them. Then gradually they faded, and the recollection of them ceased to trouble me.

‘I can remember nothing more of importance that happened on that first visit. The sense of strain continued, the frequent guests came to lunch, to dinner ; I began to see, even at that early date, something of the meretricious coquette in the manner of Ford’s wife towards almost every man she encountered—a foolish, preening, bantering manner, infinitely wearisome to all save the unintelligent, and (as I overheard Giles Wenlock’s wife remark to him) “not at all taking.”

‘I realised with a sense of helplessness that already, again as Helena Wenlock expressed it, making full use of all the implications of that phrase “people were beginning to talk.”

‘I left Oviatt after a week, making the excuse of my father’s rather delicate health ; and during the following summer, though I heard frequently from Ford, I did not see him. He and his wife were in the south of France, I in

Cornwall. It would have been impossible for anyone to gather from his letters whether he were happy or not—unless the almost avoidance of any mention of his wife might, in the phrase of the moment, “have given me a pointer.” What I did gather, and with satisfaction, was that he was hard at work. A second volume of poems was evidently almost ready to be published ; and from the one or two that he sent me in typescript, I judged that it would add to his reputation not a little. In fact, it was with a sense of amazement that I read them. Here was something new and yet *old*, and of an importance that it was hardly possible to overestimate. But the strangest idea of all that entered my brain and remained there obstinately was the conviction that the foundations of all this had been laid just over a century ago. Had that other Ford, whose genius Lockhart killed, continued to write, and had his powers developed as they well might have done, he could, he would, he **MUST** have written like this, and in no other fashion. This work was not copyist’s work, it was undeniably original, but the Ford of the nineteen thirties lay as surely implicit in the Ford of the first quarter of the nineteenth century as July is implicit in April. For a moment, and without my knowing why, it gave me a feeling of almost unpleasant shock.

‘ It was well into November of the following year before I came back to Oviatt, unwillingly enough and only after repeated invitations, for the hunting. During the eighteen months which had passed since my earlier visit, I had met Ford and his wife two or three times at the houses of mutual friends, dined with them twice in town, and stayed with them for a long week-end at their house in Pont Street, but I had refused their invitations to Oviatt because I had been, frankly, afraid to go. Not that I regarded with too great

literalness (I can think of no better word) the incident of that night in March when the Wenlocks had come to dinner. Whatever interpretation I had been tempted to put upon it at the time, when under the influence of its immediate fear and of that tall, grey, watchful house in the plain, I had now assured myself that nerves, my own and others, and only nerves, had played me those disturbing tricks ;—none the less I was afraid, I was afraid of Oviatt, and I was afraid of what might happen there. To speak the entire truth, I feared, too, lest my dislike of Ford's wife might one day show itself. Already there were ugly tales about her, which I wondered whether Ford knew, and if so, whether he credited them. They might, of course, be merely slanderous. I hoped with all my heart they were. And all this time there had lain another thought, unacknowledged at the back, so to speak, of intuition, and if momentarily and at odd times acknowledged, then immediately rejected—the thought that the terror, which I had sensed in the mind of this woman, that intangible persecution of fear, was to be followed by something more tangible, more commonplace, and therefore more fearful. *For the ultimate terror is always commonplace ;* only the first onslaught of fear is strange with the strangeness of the unwonted. I remembered that the distant sound of the guns in France, heard for the first time, had been eerie, ghostlike, even vaguely exciting ; but after weeks of hearing it had become a nagging, intimidating torment, scarcely to be borne.

‘It was in such a mood of unwillingness, then, and foreboding, that I drove slowly over the Peavor plains on a weeping November day, to Oviatt. The atmosphere of the place, when I got there, seemed to be surprisingly cheerful. The sense of strain, so far as I could gather, had vanished. I was even surprised, though I liked it no better,

that I had ever regarded the house as having that air of the supernatural, which causes buildings to be classed by the imaginative as "haunted." It was merely a gaunt, unattractive house of darkish red brick, which to my distress . harboured someone whom I increasingly disliked.

'I do not know whether fear still lived with this woman, who was my hostess; her manner certainly no longer showed it; and as I never looked her directly in the eyes, I do not know whether, had I done so, I might have surprised it in its ultimate home. But all this time I was ill at ease, not imaginatively so, merely uncomfortable and distressed, and feeling very much as I had sometimes felt in France before an engagement. Although I enjoyed the hunting after a fashion, I mentally determined that a fortnight should see the end of my stay, little knowing that before the week was out the ultimate crisis would change everything, destroy much, and leave nothing as it was before.

'As the days passed, the weather improved, until, nearly a week after my arrival, there came, to all appearances, the perfect hunting day, hazy, greyish-golden, cool, a day almost like the end of September.

'The meet had been at a friend's place some five miles away; scent, as it had been inexplicably and throughout the whole of my visit, was poor; but after losing and, we suspected, changing foxes in the most provoking manner for the whole of the morning and the earlier part of the afternoon, we at last found a noble stayer, who gave us a long and really exciting run; so that when, somewhere near the village of Beeston-under-Beckforton we lost him, too, and found no more that day, I felt that he had earned his life and freedom.

'I had lost sight of Ford early in the afternoon. I found out later that his grey had put her left fore-foot down a

rabbit-hole and lamed herself, and as he had taken a rather nasty, though not serious fall, he had gone home by car. His wife I had avoided as far as I could without appearing to avoid her, but had met her several times making a rather dawdling pace (she was always no better than a half-hearted rider) waiting for every gate to be opened for her, and always with the same rather foreign-looking son of a neighbouring munition-maker-turned-landowner. After a time I lost sight of her, too.

‘All that morning my mind had been divided between appreciation of the perfect hunting weather (perfect, that is, except for the scent), my enjoyment of the run, and that strange feeling, so well known to most,—of the man

“ . . . *that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head . . .*”

Most men that I have talked to have, at some time or another, had such an experience, perhaps when hacking home in the dusk of a winter evening, but it is rare indeed that it should come upon one in the excitement of the hunt and in broad daylight. Several times I had felt, that morning, that if only I had turned round sharply enough, I should have seen something that I had no wish to see, something commonplace enough, but which went wrapped in a loneliness, an aloofness, that human beings do not know, and which went softly and relentlessly and with an inscrutable and changeless purpose. On the occasions on which I encountered Ford’s wife and her Spanish-looking escort I had this impression most uncomfortably and strongly. Once against my will and to my secret annoyance, I yielded to an impulse, and turning round, looked backwards across the rather park-like country through the November haze, but I saw nothing—

only a few members of the hunt perfectly well known to me, and three men, plainly farmers in bowler-hats ; and yet the impression remained with me that either I had turned round just too late, or that something was behind me, invisibly marshalling its forces. For a moment, too, a feeling ever so slightly like that I had experienced in the drawing-room at Oviatt on that cold March evening of a year ago, came over me, and passed.

‘ So the morning and early afternoon went by ; a few people spoke to me, but I saw and heard them through a haze like the thickening haze of that autumn day. The cries of the huntsmen came to me as if from a great distance, as we found or checked “ Tally-ho ; gone away ; yoicks, yoicks.” I might have been listening to and looking at the moving picture of a hunt, in which hounds and men were all so many shadows on celluloid.

‘ Then what I had been waiting for obscurely happened, and in a place which I remembered we had passed earlier in the day, for the changing course of the hunt had brought us back upon our path of the morning. It was in a small field of rough, greyish grass, I remember, between two dark crescents of oak-coppice shaped like the curving horns of some animal—an eerie place, as I had noticed before, and particularly so on this deepening autumn afternoon. Suddenly, as I entered between the horns of woodland, I was aware of two strangers. The younger and taller, and the only one of the two who impressed me oddly and intensely, was a large burly man with the build almost of a giant, but with a face curiously at variance with his figure and appearance. It was a face handsome and utterly still, delicate in feature, and with a look on it of settled and withdrawn melancholy. He was dressed in faded pink of an antique fashion, that suggested affectation ; but there was nothing

affected about the look of the man. He was mounted on a powerful bay. The other had a rugged face, that was for a moment familiar and yet unfamiliar to me. I saw that he wore spectacles and was dressed in black also of a rather oldish cut.

‘As I came into the meadow the two strangers were alone ; they were sitting their horses like statues, absolutely still, and as though they were waiting for something—waiting with a kind of secure and enormous patience.

‘Even when I walked my horse across the field they never moved, but sat there in the greying afternoon between the dark lines of woodland, and looked steadily towards me, but not at me. It was as though I were invisible to them. The scene of that encounter is fixed unalterably in my memory—the rough grey meadow, the curving oakwoods, and through their western gap, far away and not yet indistinct in the gradually dimming afternoon, the castle on its precipice like one of those vignettied glimpses of landscape sometimes seen through casements in the earliest of Italian primitives.

‘As I passed the two men something strange happened. For one moment I saw, or thought I saw, the mind of the younger man ; his thoughts became mine ; his imagination surrounded me like an atmosphere ; and, as I saw, I was suddenly, terribly afraid. I can only describe my experience by saying that I seemed to look upon something whose home was the ultimate gulf between the universes, a place empty and deadly cold, where human thoughts had no meaning, and human values were transformed or reversed, where the mind dwelt alone with unchangeable images of hatred—and, as I passed him, I *knew* towards whom that hatred was directed, and I knew for whom he waited. Presently, I told myself, the woman and her escort would

emerge from between the encroaching sickle-points of woodland, and ride slowly across the meadow, as I was now doing. And the two strangers would merely continue to sit their horses, and would not even look at the riders as they passed. But the woman would be suddenly and fearfully aware of them.

‘As I rode across the field, and had almost reached the second narrow gap leading to the open country, I looked back. Ford’s wife and her companion were just coming out of the shadow of the trees. If she made any start of surprise or fear on seeing those who waited for her, I was too far off to notice it. The two men never turned their heads. They waited in complete silence, and in a physical stillness like that of statues until the two had passed. Then they turned their horses and very slowly followed.

‘Suddenly it was as though one act of a Greek play had ended, and the chorus had come on—one moment the lonely field, the lonely woods, the waiting equestrian figures—the next, I heard the hunt ahead of me. They must have come round the outside of one of the woods, while I and those I had been watching had ridden between them. Presently I heard a view-holloa.

‘Soon afterwards I lost sight of the woman and her companion, and did not see them again that afternoon.

‘About four o’clock I found myself in the little town of Beeston Magna, twelve miles from home, and with a dead-beat horse under me. I left him at a livery stables, where the proprietor knew me well, and prepared to go home on a hireling. Presently I walked him out of the little town, down the steepish hill under the railway arch and over the canal, where wreaths of mist were already rising into the abrupt chill of the valley air. As I mounted the hill beyond the brook, I could see in front of me the ruined castle perched

on its incredible pillar of rock and glaring madly in the light of a sunset as violent as the day had been muted in colour. I turned my horse on to the wide grass margin of the road, and plodded steadily homeward. I was very tired. Under other circumstances this ride would have enchanted me. The strange colours of the sunset, like the light of a furnace flaring out between doors of dark iron—the autumn silence of the oak woods on either side of the road—the rising, thickening mist that lay in pools in the hollows, and curled thinly over the grass,—all should have helped to weave a mood of enchantment, in which one thought pleasantly of home, the first rays from lighted windows, the distant voices of one's friends—all the commonplaces that make hacking home so pleasant an experience after a day's hunting even for a tired man. But I was oppressed and dispirited, and all this meant nothing to me.

‘My thoughts ran on the two men, and refused to be disciplined. Had I actually seen them ; had they waited in the grey clearing between the oakwoods, or had I imagined it—a kind of waking dream ? Then I seemed to hear Giles Wenlock's voice coming across the gap of a year and more. “Vibrations, merely vibrations : and our minds select, edit, distort according to their idiosyncrasy and nature.” I did not know—only the men haunted me.

‘Twice, indeed, as I looked into the uncertain and mist-ridden half-light, that comes just after sunset, I thought I could see two mounted figures disappearing round the next curve of the road a few hundred yards in front ; but each time, as I rounded the corner, I saw the road lie ahead of me, grey and empty for a good half-mile. They were not there. But my imagination refused, as in a nightmare, to endure the trammels of reason, and rushed on, riding with the men who were not there, taking with them each inevitable

turning, which would lead to Oviatt. But they never reached it. There my imagination failed me, and I was back upon this endless road, now running through the swamps, between the willows and starveling hedges, companioning these silent men with their lifeless faces, who rode and rode—from nowhere to nowhere.

‘Then at last this nightmare ride was at an end. I came through Shocklach village, and turning left by the smithy, came within sight of Oviatt. Even as I did so, I saw them, clearly and in the most commonplace way, and coming from a direction exactly opposite to that from which I had come. By a strange contradiction this certain and commonplace view of them in the now full moonlight disturbed me far more than the nightmare imaginations of my lonely ride. Though they now appeared to be the most ordinary persons quietly jogging home after a day’s hunting, I felt that something fatal and irrevocable had just happened.

‘They did not even pause at Oviatt, but rode on past the lodge gates, never turning their heads and disappeared up the road to Castre. I heard the hoof-beats of their horses die away up the road, then increase ever so slightly, as they crossed the river, arousing the hollow echoes of the bridge. Then I lost them altogether and could hear nothing but the murmur of the river and the faint noises of the autumn night.

‘All that evening I felt strangely exhausted, and went to bed early, but slept fitfully and ill, having my rest disturbed by half waking dreams, in which the faces of the two men came and looked down upon me between the curtains of the bed tester.

‘This condition of alternate waking and dreaming must have lasted till well into the small hours, for in one of my conscious moments I heard the hanging clock on the landing outside strike two. Then gradually I must have fallen into a

deeper unconsciousness, under the shadow of which, and at some time much later in the night, the dream came to me.

‘ At first I was conscious of nothing but a gradual lightening of the cloud of sleep ; then I seemed to wake and to be looking from some point high up and near the roof into a room lighted by the flame of a single night-light burning in a saucer. A tall, gloomy Victorian bedstead with twisted pillars stood in one corner. From it there came the moans of an unquiet sleeper. Then I realised that I was looking into the bedroom of Ford’s wife. I could see dimly the whiteness of her face under the gloom of the tester. Whatever her dreams, they must have been distressing, for the moans continued, broken occasionally by muttered words, whose meaning I could not catch. Night lay heavy on the room ; the solemn ticking of a clock came to me,—the little noises that old houses make at night—cracks, mutterings, brushings like that of wind along woodwork, the settling of timbers.

‘ Suddenly I was conscious of a return of that feeling of physical unease, like suffocation, that had been so unforgettable an experience on that evening in March now eighteen months ago. There was a change in the quality of the room’s atmosphere,—a sense of oscillation, of pressure. Then without knowledge, without volition, my eyes were drawn to one of the far corners of the room, the dark corner opposite the bedstead, and into which the feeble rays of the night-light were unable to penetrate.

‘ Something was happening there ; something like a small, luminous cloud hung there on a level with my eyes near the dark ceiling. There was movement in it, movement like that of smoke agitated and heaving under the influence of faint currents of air ;—only this movement was not quite the same, for the convolutions of the small smoky cloud

were heaving and rolling inward and inward upon its centre. They were like the eccentric convolutions of a brain. Then upon my dream descended the final horror. The cloud was lightening in colour, and before my eyes the faint indications of a face appeared, vanished, appeared again, and were horribly established. It was the face of the waiting horseman in the grey meadow. And again, as when I had first seen it, there was borne upon my mind the knowledge that this thing lived and suffered in the uttermost abyss of loneliness, and that, in the gulf where it lived, all its mental images were those of a tormented and icy hatred.

‘Now the thing was coming out into the room ; it was moving towards the bed, where the sleeper continued to moan and mutter and turn in her helplessness. The horror of the dream became unbearable. I tried to cry out, to warn the sleeping woman. I could not move, nor speak, nor even whisper. Then abruptly I woke with the sound of my own voice in my ears, to the coldness of a rainy, November dawn.

‘It was a little afterwards that one of the gardeners, passing along the path under the windows of the south wing, discovered the body of Ford’s wife lying upon the paving stones, and surrounded by fragments of glass from the window, through which, in the dawn of that rainy November day, she had, perhaps walking in her sleep, stumbled and fallen.’

There was a long pause. Then Shiplake spoke again. ‘I do not think Ford has ever written a poem since his wife’s death. He merely continues to publish collected and selected editions—and one day I discovered that he had destroyed the only extant portrait, painted in early childhood, of his ancestor, Edmund Ford.’

A FEW INDIAN BIRD CHARACTERS.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL A. H. E. MOSSE, C.I.E.

As we stroll beneath the telegraph wires towards a little wayside 'tank,' something flushes a small bird from a field of low crops that we are passing, a little lady of forceful if not entirely attractive character. Technically a game bird, the Bustard-quail is of a different family from the true quails, with which it cannot compare from either the sportsman's or the gourmet's point of view. Its particular interest for us arises out of the remarkable domestic customs which have led me to refer to it in the feminine gender.

The bustard-quail in the hand may at once be separated from the quails proper by the absence of a fourth toe, a lack which it shares with the bustards, hence possibly its popular name. When you put one up in a corn field it rises with the whirr of a game bird and flies fast, but only for a short distance, frequently dropping within twenty or thirty yards back into the corn, whence it defies you to flush it again.

I have to this day a vivid recollection of my first meeting with this little amazon among small birds. I was sitting in a tree, awaiting the advance of a beat for a panther, when there fell on my ears a peculiar, half-booming, half-purring sound—I have since heard it likened to the droning sound of a motor-bicycle softened by distance. At this time I had noticed it once or twice before, but had not yet discovered its origin. The call, if such it were, was shortly answered by a similar sound from the opposite side of the jungle track which passed by my tree. The purring on the right grew louder. So did that on the left. The performers were

evidently approaching each other, and presently a quail of sorts ran out of the jungle and squatted on the track a dozen yards from my *machán*. The challenger had entered the ring. Almost immediately it stood up and started to utter the booming call, opening wide its wings and half squatting again as it did so. Still nearer sounded the rival response, and a moment later a second quail arrived upon the scene. With hardly a pause it hurled itself upon the first comer.

I have seen other birds having an argument, but never a display of greater conviction in its discussion, although, so far as I could judge, no great amount of damage was being inflicted on either side. But I was not to witness a finish. The beat meanwhile had been progressing, and a rustling in the bushes heralded the advent of a small sounder of pig which, heads low and giving a misleading impression of not looking where they were going, swept across the track. The disturbance was so close as to be too much even for the single-eyed concentration of the two little combatants, who fell apart and disappeared.

When I identified my new acquaintances I was amazed to learn that I had seen a duel between not cock but hen birds ! More, it is not merely a matter of the suffragette spirit which has enabled the once weaker sex to make good a claim to equality of rights and privileges ; they have actually succeeded in achieving a complete reversal of rôles. It is always the lady who, as we have seen, challenges her rival to deadly combat ; the lady who, having proved herself the better woman, proceeds to court, with impassioned love-making, the object of her affections. It is the gentleman, here in truth the gentler being, who coyly yields to his lover's advances. And, when his spouse has laid the essential eggs in the nest—only because he, poor thing, is incapable of doing so—it is the husband who, unaided, broods upon

them. It is even said by the natives that if she catches him for a moment off the nest she beats him. And when the youthful family have appeared, it is still Daddy who fathers them with tenderest care, and brings them up in the way that bustard-quail should go. While the lady—alas ! that I must make the distressing revelation—strolls off, without another thought for her domestic ties, in search of further amorous adventure !

Need it have gone quite so far ? The crane, that strict monogamist, looks down his long bill at the peacock with his harem of four or five. But the arrangement has the odour of respectability acquired by custom of long standing ; moreover, the peacock is an oriental potentate. And at any rate, though he may consider the upbringing of children to be solely the woman's business—and he is not alone in this—he is yet a believer in family life, and does continue to give his wives the honour and pleasure of his society, and support in case of need.

But the character of the bustard-quail's polyandry is too blatantly immoral. When a lady plants all the responsibilities which she has herself created upon the pinions of a meek and long-suffering mate, then callously and permanently deserts him to repeat the game elsewhere, not once, but just as often, it is said, as she can find fresh victims for seduction—well, to put it vulgarly, it really is a bit too thick. And such a pretty little bird too ! It only shows how you never can tell.

Very different from those just described are the domestic habits of our next subject. That remarkable construction, the Weaver Bird's nest, of which a dozen or so are to be seen hanging from the outer branches of a *bábul* (mimosa) tree on the bund of the tank above mentioned, is a triumph

of marital co-operation as well as of skilled workmanship. It is probably well known to many folk who have no idea what the little architects are like. We should not go far wrong in describing him, when in full dress, as a handsome sparrow with a yellow cap and yellow vest ; she as resembling a better-looking, rather yellowish hen sparrow. As for the nest, a brief description may be given for those who have not seen it.

It is a conspicuous as well as a substantial object, for no concealment is called for where the whole idea is that of a domicile which, by design and construction, shall be as proof against the intrusion of any likely robber as it certainly is against the weather. Wonderfully woven of strips of palm fibre or suitable grass or other similar material, it is shaped like one of the glass retorts they use in a chemical laboratory and suspended from the end of a branch, the retort tube hanging vertically downwards to form an entrance funnel which may vary in length from four or five inches to a foot. As may be imagined, it would be exceedingly difficult for anything but a small bird or an insect to get at the contents of such a nest and, hanging free in the air as it does, it is as safe as could be desired from the depredations of that hated trio, snake and crow and squirrel.

As to the manner of building, I may be permitted to quote the substance of E. H. Aitken's excellent description :

'The bird notches the edge of a palm leaf—or grass blade—with its beak, and then by main force tears off a long thin fibre, hardly thicker than darning cotton. The process of building is as follows. The fibres are first wound and twined very securely about the twigs at the end of the selected branch, and then plaited into each other to form a stalk, or neck, several inches in length. As this progresses it is gradually expanded in the form of an inverted wine-

glass, or bell, till it is large enough for the accommodation of the family, and then the mouth of the bell is divided into two equal parts by a strong band woven across it. This is a critical stage in the progress of the work. For now the birds can sit on the cross-band and judge how the nest swings. If it is badly balanced, they bring lumps of clay and stick them on one side or the other until the defect is remedied. At least this is the usually accepted explanation of the curious patches of clay which are generally found inside of weaver birds' nests. One thing certain is that, for some reason or another, the birds often get dissatisfied with the nest at this stage, and give it up and begin another. If satisfied they proceed to finish it: Hitherto both birds have been working on the same lines. Now the hen sits on the cross-band while her mate fetches fibres. He pushes them through to her from the outside and she returns them to him. So they weave, closing up the bell on one side of the cross-band so as to form a little hollow for the eggs, and prolonging the other into a long tunnel or neck. The rim of this tunnel is never bound or hemmed. It grows thinner and more flimsy to the end, which is frayed out, affording no firm hold to an enemy.'

It is pleasant, after what we have seen of the marriage state among the bustard-quails, to note the whole-hearted co-operation of the weaver *ménage*. A true woman, this little bird wife, getting his full share of work out of her lord by patting him on the back and telling him what a comfort it is to have a handy man about the house. All the time with the near future in mind, when the cares of motherhood must keep her for a while immured indoors, and unable to keep an eye upon him. A steady enough fellow, her mate, but rather inclined to fancy himself in that bright waistcoat of his, while the old adage about idle hands—or wings or beaks—has its force in bird society. Her gentle guile, however, achieves its purpose. She has contrived so to fill his

head with the idea of his own skill as a weaver, that in the days of his grass widowerhood he can think of little else and spends his spare time in weaving on his own account—and keeps out of mischief. Witness the number of incomplete cocks' nests which may be observed in any weaver colony ; though he sometimes begins by adding a few extra inches to the length of the funnel of the home.

Those makeweight blobs of mud, by the way, are said by the natives to be intended to have fireflies stuck on them to light up the dark interior. A charming fancy—or is it but a fancy ? I have never found, nor indeed heard, of anyone else finding a firefly in a nest, but why should not a devoted wife and mother have an illuminated nursery ? I am sure she deserves it, as certainly as does the nursery.

Our contemplation of Weaver domesticities, induced by the sight of those pendent nests, is interrupted by the voice of the sole inhabitant of the *bábul* tree—it being the cold weather, the cheery company of weaver birds is away from home. A peculiar trilling whistle, this voice, proceeding from a large White-breasted Kingfisher occupying a point of vantage on a projecting branch of the tree. We are not concerned with water birds to-day, so it may be as well to make it clear at once that, although the pure blood of the Kingfishers is in his veins, and the iridescent blue of their livery upon his back, this fisher is in truth but little of a fishermen. That no fishy meal has ever passed his great red bill I will not aver, and I believe he has retained a liking for little frogs, but his everyday hunting-ground at the present time is undoubtedly the dry land.

Is an evolutionary change going on before our eyes ? Originally an eater of fish like his brethren, one can imagine him acquiring a preference for frogs, and then following

Jeremy Fisher on to the land where, perhaps, he proved easier to catch. Easy to imagine further some small creature of the dry land, a lizard may be, grabbed in mistake for a frog and found to have an intriguing flavour. And so on until to-day, when we notice that his look-out post, although, as it chances, in the neighbourhood of water, is definitely on the landward side of the trees; and whatever it was that he dropped upon just now—it may have been an insect of sorts—it certainly was no fish. I have indeed seen one of these birds with a tail, before it disappeared, hanging from the side of his bill, which may possibly have been a lizard's but looked much more like that of a mouse. And the raucous scream to which he gives utterance, as he flies away, reminds us that his Australian cousin, the Laughing Jackass, kingfisher though he be by descent, has to-day entirely forgotten that there is such a thing as a fish. Our friend has not quite reached that stage yet, but I fancy that in a trivial century or two he will have done so.

I have mentioned that a line of telegraph wires passed near the tank: it did not lack occupants. We human beings have our exclusive clubs or societies, membership of which is open to individuals of very different types, subject to some specific qualification which all alike must possess, the bond, it may be, of a common service or of a common hobby. Such a society, I find, exists among the birds of the Indian plains, traversed as it is with telegraph lines.

Primarily, I think, an Insect Shikar Club, this Avine Society of the Telegraph Wire. The first general qualification is the possession of the right kind of feet. This, of course, rules out the running birds like the Plovers, or a bird which lives on the wing but is quite incapable of perching, like the Swift. Then there is the Nightjar, which sits in a

tree oftener than is always realised, but, when it does so, squats lengthwise on a bough instead of across it ; such a bird would be merely a figure of fun, should it attempt to do the like along a telegraph wire.

But it is not enough to be able to perch on a wire in the correct attitude. All sorts of common people might be able to find their way into the select circle if it were. Let us consider the most important members and see whether we can find the bond in common.

The President is undoubtedly the Roller, the so-called 'Blue Jay,' though no more a jay than he is a sparrow. A quite soberly attired, rather elderly gentleman, as he sits on one of the Club wires. But it is an exclusive Society, this, and it is desirable that its President should have a distinctive robe of office. This, by traditional custom, he displays when he leaves the Club premises, and spreads his wings in flight to exhibit those striking bands of imperial purple, alternating with brilliant turquoise, which constitute a livery unique in the feathered world.

When one thinks of the miles of telegraph wire, the scores of species of birds with perching toes, it will be apparent that the maintenance of the Society's exclusiveness cannot be easy. It follows that the Secretary must be a bird with a personality, and the Society has made the obvious selection in the Kingcrow. For no other bird in the land has the same capacity, by virtue of sheer force of character, of dealing with doubtful characters or routing an intruder. And with that long forked tail to his black suit there is none can pretend not to know who he is.

The kingcrow is a Drongo Shrike. Of other members, among the most prominent are his cousins, the true Shrikes, notably the Great Grey Shrike. Though not technically one of the Birds of Prey, he is one in miniature by disposition

and habit, and looks the robber baron that he is. For his black brows lend a sinister aspect to his undoubted air of breeding, and the hawk-like hooked tip to his bill suggests the business-like manner in which he is wont to use it upon the skull of lizard or occasional fledgeling warbler. I do not really like his professional habit of hanging his meat on a thorn larder. But who am I—with my periodical poulterer's bill—that I should criticise ?

Of another kidney is that lovely little bird, slender of build and long of tail, the Green Bee-eater. A very regular member, this, with a taste for bees, no doubt, but not over-particular as to the nature of the insect prey—so that it be a convenient size—which it hawks from its perch, and returns to batter on the wire before committing it to its final destination.

These four are the chief original members ; all, be it noted, making their living, in the main, by shikarring insect life. That, of course, may be said of many others. But it is the method that matters ; these are the ' dry fly ' purists among birds. The Fantail Flycatcher takes its chance among the rose bushes. The Babblers turn over dry leaves on the ground, prospecting for spiders and hidden insect oddments. The little Warblers specialise in spotting protectively coloured caterpillars amidst the foliage of trees. But the original members of the A.S.T.W. pride themselves on mastery of the technique of observation from an elevated post of outlook, whence to dart or pounce upon their prey. It is optional whether to take it on the wing, as is the way of the kingcrow, or to seize it on the ground as the roller prefers to do. The latter is also the method of the White-breasted Kingfisher, one of the newer members, who has only recently qualified for election, and is still not entirely at home in the Club.

I confess I have my doubts as to whether the Society is quite so exclusive as originally planned. The shrike's larder is often filled with grasshoppers and beetles, and an occasional lizard may pass. But some of his deeds are dark. The truth is—well, is not the Secretary his cousin, and this the East ?

The shrike's admission was, I fancy, the thin end of the wedge, which has led, as it always does, to laxity in other directions. Hence, presumably, the occasional appearance on the wires of such lesser birds of prey as the Spotted Owlet, the Shikra (the pale Indian Sparrow Hawk), and that handsome little Falcon, the *Turumti*. Unless, of course, these are honorary members ; they are all, I think, insect-eaters on occasion, certainly the first two. I am sure that the Swallows—genuine insect shikaris, but unsound in their methods—come under this category, a privilege of which they show the fullest appreciation.

What, however, of the Doves ? It is not apparent why they should receive special treatment ; yet, entirely unqualified, they are not infrequently to be seen on the Club premises. The fact is, that since the dove's original stroke of luck at the time of the flood, by reason of which it was thenceforth enabled to deceive old Noah as to its true character, it has—contriving, as it does, to look the part—made the most of a reputation for meek-and-mildness for which there is no real foundation. It is my personal belief that on the wires of the A.S.T.W. the dove is invariably a gate-crasher. As to the little secretary's attitude in the matter, when that shameless buccaneer, the Crow, tries it on, the kingcrow has him off the wires in the twinkling of an eye. But the dove—well, everything on wings knows what an arrant humbug he is, but he does no harm—and so he gets away with it once more.

AIMLESS AFTERNOON.

BY NUGENT BARKER.

EVERINGHAM, with his knees up to his chin, was sitting on the beach at Shorehampton, staring over the sea ; and the sunlight, from behind the lower edge of a cloud, was coming down in a big, faint fan, smearing a white streak along the very thread of the horizon.

After staring for a long time at a point midway between the cloud and the water, Everingham turned his head. The beach was almost deserted at this hushed and played-out end of the summer season. A hundred yards to his right, four or five people were sitting, grouped and motionless, and a white-hatted man with his back to the indolent waves was on the point of taking their photograph. Everingham waited for the click of the shutter ; then, seeing the man approaching the group of people, he persuaded himself that he had heard it.

The fan of sunlight was dissolving now into the dull sky ; the white smear was fading as though the sea were lapping it off the horizon ; and Everingham lingered on until his eyes and ears were certain that not a glimmer remained. He thought that he had heard the faintest sound as the last spark died. Hearing was very acute on such a day as this, and he fancied that with the smallest effort he might project himself long distances, and there exist in mind, if not in body.

The wind began to blow, yet he still lingered ; then he sprang up in a flurry, as though there were duties of great importance that he must do. There was none. He intended

—what was it that he intended to do ? To turn away from the sea. Yes, certainly that. To wander back to the Marine Hotel ? He stooped, and picked a piece of seaweed from his trousers, and saw the group of people from the corner of his eye.

Everingham climbed the noisy slope of shingle, and, coming to a flight of steps in the wall at the back of it, reached a broad and ornamented terrace, where a pavilion of glass faced him. On the outside of one of the panes, the bill of a departed pierrot troupe was still showing. In summer the place was full of sun and sound and flies ; but now the air was cold and dead, and only a single, human voice could be heard buzzing, intensely pronounced. Inside the door, to the left, there was a small bar where soft drinks, cigarettes, and chocolates were for sale, and Everingham said to the young woman who presided at it :

‘Ten Players, please !’

She looked up, smiling, from her knitting of sky-blue wool, and reached for a packet, bright in its wrapping of cellophane paper. He did not need these cigarettes. There were a hundred in his hotel bedroom. He had spoken for the sake of speaking ; particularly, perhaps, for the sake of crushing that monotonous voice. It had certainly paused—but Everingham, staring round the pavilion, soon saw that the late speaker had no other thought beyond his companion in the faded yellow *béret*. The youth had paused because he was casting about for something clever to say, and because the girl, perilously tilting her glass on the marble-topped table between them, was expecting his next remark to outshine all those that had gone before ; and the effort had fixed the young man’s mouth and eyes into three circles, from which nothing emerged but the darkness of despair.

Impulsively, Everingham went towards their table. To

his delight they smiled at him as he was passing ; and he, surprised and flattered, smiled at them. He caught their serious eyes. For a moment the glass walls of the pavilion expanded, to enclose the whole of the throbbing world.

Fearful of breaking, by speech, the spell of this encounter, he hurried away through the door at the far end of the pavilion, thence climbing further steps to the parade above. He entered one of the deserted shelters that were set at intervals along the Shorehampton parade ; but, in spite of the scene in the pavilion, he shivered as he gazed at the sea. ' Yes. Even the Marine Hotel is better than this,' he murmured, starting up ; and five minutes later he stood in the hall that was forever impregnated with the smells of seasmist and cooking.

' What do I want with my key ? ' he muttered, dropping his hand from the rack that held the keys, and mooning back to the hotel entrance. A waiter was standing there, deeply occupied, wetting the stub of a pencil ; his fingers were almost hidden by his dirty cuffs ; behind him stretched a plot of grass, the railings of the promenade, the thread of the horizon.

Everingham sighed, and, putting his hand into his pocket, ran his fingers over the cellophane wrapping of the cigarettes ; but already the thrill of the contact was passing away. Turning abruptly, he reached for his key from the rack, and hurried into the coffee-room that crushed him at once with its grimy walls, its ceiling almost out of sight, its napkins folded and waiting. He stood at a table, and drummed, with his key, a song that the pierrots had sung in the summer ; and through another door he passed into the depths of the house. Climbing the staircase, softly creaking every stair as he walked, Everingham rose towards the roof of the Marine Hotel, Shorehampton. He saw the dull white

figures of chambermaids flitting along the corridors that stretched away from the successive landings. 'Hi, there ! Are you all daft ?' he shouted, and wondered why he had chosen that particular adjective. No one answered him ; and presently he turned the key in his lock, and pushed open his door.

The young man asleep on the bed stirred at the jarring sound of the key in the lock. Everingham sighed and walked steadily onwards, the light of the room fading from his eyes. He bent down, smiling, towards the sleeper, whom at that instant he did not see. 'Hey ! Wake up ! Wake up !' he whispered resonantly into the young man's ear : and Everingham, waking up, and becoming momentarily blinded by the glare from the window, turned in a panic on his bed.

The voice that he had heard in his ear, the touch that he had felt on his shoulder, soon resolved themselves into gestures that had come from within himself and not from without. Lying for another full minute on his back, he watched, beneath the mottled ceiling, the oscillating of a fly that had overlived in this mournful room. 'Oh, fly to hell !' moaned Everingham at last, and sat upright upon the bed. His eyes no longer saw the light of day intensified, as they had done on his awakening. He stared at the drab routine of the sky. The sight of it took him to the window, to view the scene that he knew too well, to gaze at the horizon of the sea. The waves of the sea were all crushed out by the heaviness of the afternoon. Standing there at the window, he remembered his dream. He had found himself in the pavilion. He had asked the woman at the bar for cigarettes, and with a frown she had reached out a hand from her knitting of sea-green wool. He could hear, even now, the thud of the packet on the counter, a packet

of Players in shop-soiled cellophane wrapping. And he hadn't needed cigarettes. He'd got a hundred in his hotel bedroom. He had spoken for the sake of speaking, he remembered now ; for the sake of shattering that deep silence. He had gone away, pursued by the clicking of the knitting-needles that seemed to accentuate the emptiness of the tables and to contract upon him the four walls of the pavilion. . . .

That was all. A barren scrap of dream. He turned his back to the window, and stared into the room. The farthest corners were towering store-cupboards of shade. He had chosen this large, unfathomable room because he wished for the physical freedom that only space can give—but how could he be free, when for ever clamped by his thoughts ? Across the floor, and scarcely throwing a flush on the surrounding air, a fire was faintly glowing, and by it sat a woman. A woman ? . . . But who was she ? . . . And how did she come here ? . . . He dared to approach her ; stood, and watched her face. A woman sitting by his hearth, asleep, her lashes almost touching her cheek ; smiling, waiting.

Though the fire did not cast its glow upon him, at least her mouth had kindled a smile upon his. She would be embarrassed if he awoke her now. He must leave her here, to sleep on, undisturbed, and later he would call a chamber-maid.

Walking on tiptoe, searching the room for his hat, he stopped at intervals to listen to her breathing ; then, leaving the door unlocked and putting the key into his pocket, he paused at the brink of the staircase. Where should he go ? It pleased him to know that she was there, asleep, behind his door. A small and misty skylight hung above his head, sprinkling upon his hair the temper of the afternoon. Where

should he go? To the sea? Oh yes, why not? He would go and lie on the beach, and wait until the sea washed him away. His arms were hanging limply at his side. He dropped his hat, and stooped to pick it up, and saw the gleaming of his door-handle from the corner of his eye.

Accompanied by the creaking of stairs, Everingham descended to the ground floor of the Marine Hotel, Shorehampton. Passing through the coffee-room, his thin and languid figure looked as unsubstantial as a ghost. The hall was empty; no one loitered at the entrance; the smell of the Marine Hotel dwindled behind him. At the foot of the steps there were two stone urns, enlivened with dead geraniums; a faint wind rustled through the stems, but its note was soon supplanted by the crunching of shingle, and as Everingham stood on the quiet sand there was not a whisper along the whole shore. In the clear, grey light of the afternoon he could see great distances. 'This is better!' he muttered, starting to walk westwards at a quick pace, ready to feel the springing of the sand beneath his feet. On his right hand, far ahead, there lay the glass pavilion, looking as heavy as lead beneath the sunless sky; and when he had come abreast of it, his pace was slacker, and he felt as though he wanted to sink down on to the sand, and die. His heaviness of mind and body brought him to a standstill at last; he could go no farther; and sighing, he drooped down to the moaning man who slept on the sand at his feet.

'Wake up! Wake up!' cried Everingham.

Then Everingham woke up. His cheeks were pressed between his drawn-up knees, and his eyes, narrow with dreams, were directed towards the sand and worm-casts and fan-shaped cockle-shells at his feet. The cool air soon brought him to full consciousness of his surroundings; looking round to his right, he saw the family group, moving

now, and the photographer on the point of attaining it ; and as soon as the man in the white hat had reached the people, they stood up, as though something were ended, and began to walk away. Everingham turned his head, and looked at the sea, hoping that it might furrow into waves. As he stared at the sea, he remembered his dream. He had awakened panic-stricken in his hotel bedroom, thinking that he had heard a voice in his ear. The voice was in fact no more than his own, speaking—who knows ?—from some inner dream that had just ended ; and for some minutes he had continued to lie on his bed, watching a fly beneath the ceiling. He had found himself later at the window, staring dejectedly at the scene beyond ; and finally he had stared into the room itself, running his eye over all the familiar things, the monstrosly patterned wall-paper, the crumpled counterpane on the bed, the corners towering with shade, the pleated and glimmering sheet of paper hiding the mouth of the fireplace and shaped like a fan.

A scrap of dream, over when scarcely begun ! But all his life was dreams, calling and shaping and coming to nothing. The sea and the sky were uniform in colour now, and almost in texture—grey and without lustre. Everingham lifted his head, and gazed at the horizon. Only that was real and always there. It ran like a thread between heaven and earth ; and as he gazed, the thread rolled up from either end, and formed a knot, pressing against his sight.

MANHATTAN NOTEBOOK.

BY PETER QUENNELL.

It takes a certain amount of resolution, some cold mornings, to press the button of the elevator and receive as one does so a small but unpleasantly perceptible electric shock ! A microscopic electric dagger pierces one's finger-tip. There are sparks everywhere. They lurk among one's clothes ; they crackle under the hair-brush ; and one's hair itself, if it is brushed too hard, stands out and waves fitfully around one's head, as if a phantom had just emerged from the depths of the looking-glass. New York is the least ghost-ridden, but it is also the most phantasmal of modern cities. On first arriving, it is difficult to believe in all that one sees ; and, even when a third or fourth visit has made Manhattan an acquaintance if not a friend, it has still the flat harsh two-dimensional reality of a coloured picture post card rather than the reality of smaller and older towns that, whether one admires them or despises them, have gradually become a part of one's personal existence. Perhaps the unreality of the city has something to do with the peculiar fashion in which it is constructed—a sea-city from which the sea is seldom visible unless, of course, one possesses a new apartment overlooking the East river, climbs to the top of the Empire State Building or ventures down to the Battery at the end of the island and watches the salt-water slapping against sea-worn piles and the tugs and ferries pushing through a choppy sea-scape. Yet New York, on occasions, will smell of the sea. And these puffs of salt-

scented, ooze-smelling sea-breeze will sometimes catch one in very unexpected places—as one walks home along Fifth Avenue beneath the arc-lamps or in the doorway of a Fifty-Second Street night club.

And then, there is the character of the sub-soil. Or rather, there is the lack of sub-soil. London, for instance, stands like most other European cities upon a huge layer of refuse, a vast accumulation of decayed matter, piled up century after century till the oldest buildings are now almost underground. Thus, even the hardest pavement may be supposed to have a kind of resilience. A street *gives* under the weight of traffic . . . whereas, in New York, which is reared for the most part upon the naked volcanic rock of Manhattan, no such resilience can exist. One hammers the pavement, which hammers back mercilessly. Central Park, bleakest and grimmest of all metropolitan open spaces, is wrinkled and seamed with huge outcroppings of dark yellow-reddish stone. No wonder its stunted trees have a transitory discouraged air—that its grass is thin and brown—that the human beings who frequent it seem drab and nervous. Baudelaire, who dreamed of Lisbon because he had been told it was a city of water, metal and masonry, would have delighted in New York, though the nostalgia he loved to cultivate in a half-rebuilt Paris would have found very little purchase here. New York has many contrasts, it is true. But they are so violent, so overdramatic (just as the sun is over-bright, the wind over-cold) that they make at last a comparatively faint impression. In this respect, it resembles an Eastern city, with the higgledy-piggledy character of a Tokyo or a Shanghai; for the elevateds create a desert wherever they go; and, since the elevated railways follow second, third, sixth and ninth avenues perpendicularly down the island, it is striped with

long dismal noisy slums, a single street wide, where the pavements are dirty and ill-repaired, and Italian, Jewish and negro families overflow on to swarming brownstone doorsteps, and children rush on roller-skates among battered garbage cans. The rusty metal lattice-work that blocks the sky—vibrant with the hideous roar of passing trains—adds to the effect of some vast, gaunt, desolate Oriental bazaar ; and, as in the Orient, only a short walk will carry one from the depths of squalor and poverty to the heights of affluence and respectability, from a region of free-lunch saloons and foreign barber-shops to the expensive florists and gigantic apartment houses that line Park Avenue.

Periods are sandwiched together with similar inconsequence and, as one looks along a cross-street, one is often surveying an entire cross-section of New York's architectural development—a row of down-at-heel brownstone houses, three or four storeys high, a brown Gothic church, all meaningless niches and perverted pinnacles, some semi-modern shops of the transition period and behind them, splitting the intense azure of an unclouded sky, the extravagant midmost wedge of the Rockefeller Centre. This is New York's nearest approach to a really fine building. It is simple, bold, unaffected, yet it succeeds in producing an impression of extraordinary drama—particularly when it catches the afternoon sunshine, with a single cloud, rather low down, to help exaggerate its overwhelming magnitude. When evening thickens, the windows in the enormous shadowed plane presented to an observer on the opposite side of Fifth Avenue fill one by one with light as if the cells of some stupendous honeycomb were being gradually filled with honey. But don't think of the offices they represent—the myriad names in the echoing lobbies below—and forget, if you can, those bustling offices themselves : the

metal filing-cabinets painted a dim bronze-green, the typewriters and the frosted glass partitions ! Forget the bubbling ice-water fountain near the door of the washroom, and the wire basket with its discarded paper drinking cups !

You look—and, for some reason, you look away. In the courtyard of the Rockefeller Centre is a kind of perpetual fun-fair—skating on artificial ice, flowering trees, tulips and hyacinths potted out regardless of the season. But the base of the building betrays its summit. Statuary, details of shop-fronts and main entrance doors are as meretricious as anything to be seen on the latest transatlantic liner ; and that, after all, is saying a great deal. It is as if beauty of detail were inappropriate in a country where detail has always been neglected, where no one notices the pile of garbage or the broken-down automobile dumped on the vacant lot between the houses. A magnificent attempt, yet it is somehow unfinished—unblessed with the æsthetic self-assurance that distinguishes the public buildings of other periods. The beauty it possesses is strangely irrelevant : it refuses to take its place in any yet formulated æsthetic scheme.

London or Paris we see through so many eyes. For New York no view-point has yet been discovered ; and the prodigious city lies like a lump on the contemporary consciousness which tries, in vain, to resolve it into literary nourishment. How can such a metropolis be fully digested ? It is enormous : on the other hand, it is extremely small, since wealth, privilege, intellectual and social celebrity are divided among comparatively few figures. It is modern : but it incorporates the most ancient prejudices and caters to every known form of traditional snobbery. It is American : yet it houses a gigantic population to whom English, or American-English, is a second language, who live here

as squatters or colonists, but not as inhabitants. Native-born American writers are helpless before it. Transplant them from the provincial centres, with which they deal very often in a brilliant and masterly style, to the absorbing, bewildering spectacle of Manhattan ; and the result is as poor as *Butterfield 8*, whereas their previous achievements have been as impressive as *Appointment in Samarra*. There is no good modern novel of New York life, for even the action of *The Great Gatsby* (though its atmosphere is strongly metropolitan) takes place outside the city limits ; and, though there have been poems about New York, they are none of them memorable.

Indeed, the effect of New York on the imagination may be likened to the effect of alcohol as particularised by the Porter in *Macbeth*. It stimulates but, in the last resort, it sterilises. Thus, Manhattan is the perfect place of residence for journalists, financiers, advertising-men and other persons whose activity depends on constant artificial stimulus, who live in an exciting but illusory world of their own creation that can only exist just so long as they 'keep going.' To them, its saline air is a strong intoxicant. They relish its dazzling incongruity : they delight in the impression of tremendous speed (though the first rush generally fails to reach its objective) : they are happy because never unoccupied and never alone. But the average businessman is sometimes curiously unbusinesslike : there is an odd slackness, a perplexing lethargy, behind the scenes . . .

Even established residents live in New York as if on a brief visit ; and after half a dozen years (a celebrated American writer once admitted) he still felt that his hat and his overcoat were only temporarily hanging in the hall and that at any moment he might pack his suitcase and say good-bye. The life of an acknowledged visitor is doubly

rootless ; and his impressions, whether agreeable or disagreeable, seem to split up into a multiplicity of exclamatory marks. Madison Square Garden and the six-day bicycle races ! Round a curved plane, like the rim of an elliptical roulette wheel, go flying the tiny taut-thewed bicyclists now galvanised into a furious burst of energy, now relaxing in a slow dreamy peripheral movement. Or the same building is transformed for the purposes of a prize-fight. White-coated sellers of cocoa-cola or iced beer drift across the smoke-fogged galleries ; purplish lamps sizzle down the midmost ring ; and the contestants shuffle their feet to court applause ; till the gloves smack loudly in a sudden silence. Or—a third transformation—the arena is a skating rink and the hockey-players shoot like swallows across the ice-floor, becoming padded dolls as they crash heavily against the barrier. They scrimmage, tussle and use their fists amid roars of enthusiasm. Heads are gashed off, players disqualified, and goals recorded.

A peculiar callousness is the emotional by-product of New York life—an insensitiveness to human suffering and human brutality that one has also noticed in the countries of the Far East. This is a city where anything may happen where nothing surprises. Dead-drunk, a young man is propped against the fire-hydrant within twenty feet of the awning of an expensive night club. He is very drunk for that matter, he might be dying. Yes, says the doorman (dressed in the uniform of a Spahi officer : inside there are cellophane palm trees and electric stars, pricking a dim blue vault), he has been there for quite some time. Nobody is very much perturbed ; and meanwhile the newspapermen are selling the early morning edition of to-morrow's tabloid, which features wonderful and entirely unexpected pictures of the latest rape or kidnapping, the

elevated thrums by over the cross-street, and the radio in a luxurious taxi is swinging 'Loch Lomond.' An Irish cop plods into sight with dangling night-stick; and a smell of the sea and a hooting of tugs drifts up from the river.

WHILE BEATS ONE HEART.

*While sings one bird ere autumn's bough forsaken
Reveals a world laid bare,
Still music reigns in golden notes that waken
The winter air ;
And glad am I, because that song apart
Rings in my soul and pulses through my heart !*

*While blooms one rose within my lonely garden
The summer is not lost :
And though December skies may freeze and harden,
I count the cost
Of sunshine not in vain : for well I know
Spring follows winter, warmth must conquer snow !*

*While beats one heart in loyal love and duty,
A heart forever true,
I see around a realm of joy and beauty
The whole year through—
And life becomes resplendent and divine
Whene'er your generous love I claim for mine !*

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Nigeria.

FROM A HOSPITAL WINDOW.

BY HAIDÉE BLACKBURNE.

I DO not know if any hospital claims to be the most beautifully situated in the world ; but there is one in Palestine which surely has the loveliest view of all. It is a Missionary hospital, but they have taken the stranger in ; and she lies in their private ward, and would in gratitude record something of the peace and kindness of this place of healing. The ward is white and spotless, more so than in any London nursing-home, and as for the flowers ! No need for friends to spend their half-crowns on a bunch from the florist ! Sister fills the vases each day from the garden, or the hills just outside the town, although since ‘ the troubles ’ started, the nurses are not allowed to wander far afield. Gangsters behind the rocks and boulders might not always see the uniform which would most surely be their protection in happier days. One day I counted eleven vases in my room ; marigolds in a copper bowl ; a stone jar full of lupins, blue as the sky. One feels sorry for the flower-loving officer who a week or so ago, stopped his car to gather lupins growing just off the road, but was driven away by an unseen sniper ! There are crimson anemones (nearly over now the sun is growing stronger) yellow daisies and mignonette and petunias ; and even a tiny vase of jasmine, with its delicate scent. From one window of the room, there is a view of green hills, with the white road winding away up to Nazareth. Another shows the town laid out before one like a panorama. Flat-roofed houses, grey and white. A mosque with its minaret, where the muezzin appears

three times a day. Rather a dejected individual he looks, as he slouches round the little railed-in balcony, his hands held up behind his ears, calling the faithful to prayer. The faithful appear to take little notice. There is a café close by the mosque ; and the customers seem to sit all day at tables outside, drinking coffee and playing cards, some of them in European dress, except for the scarlet tarboosh. Tall Arabs crowd the narrow street, strings of camels follow a man on a donkey, tied one behind the other ; and the patience of the donkey in Palestine is only equalled by the superciliousness of the camel. There are Bedouin women swathed in long black robes, so that one thinks the place is filled with widows, until one sees that they are following their husbands along the road to the market. One has a squawking hen tied in a basket on her head ; and carries a baby on her back. All carry something on their heads ; it is amazing how they balance jars of petrol and tins of water. Their lords and masters stride on ahead. Police, both English and Palestinian, exchange friendly greetings with the crowd, while they keep a watchful eye for suspicious characters.

But I have kept the third and fourth windows to the last. They look out on the Sea of Galilee so indescribably lovely in its blue stillness with the Syrian hills on the other side. There is little sign of life on that coast, beyond here and there a dim line which marks some small village, but at night a light shines steadily across the lake. During hours of sleeplessness, that light seems friendly and comforting. In reality it shows that a Jewish Colony is awake to the ever-present possibility of an Arab attack. I had seen something of Colonies like this, where men and women are building up a new life for themselves on a communal basis. We had marvelled at the hardness of the life. Work

from the first sign of dawn, until stopped by darkness, when it is dangerous to remain in the fields or outlying parts of the Colony. The women work as hard as the men, whether on the land, or among the cattle, or putting up fresh buildings ; but their work also lies in the kitchens and laundries, or in looking after the babies in the Home, which is always the best building in the Colony. Its up-to-date arrangements make it very different to the one-roomed huts where the parents of the children live—or rather, where they sleep ; for there is no room for anything but a bed and a cupboard. Meals are eaten in a central dining-room, which also serves for recreation—when there is time for it. No possibility of cleanliness except communally.

They tell us it is ideal for a child to start life at a fortnight old away from its parents, who appreciate it more because of having none of the anxiety or burden of its upbringing, but only the pleasure of seeing it at holiday-times and of playing with it each evening for an hour or so. I humbly asked a young man who proudly showed us round one of the Homes, whether the children do not miss something in having no home-life, but he explained that their love for their parents is greater than if they were always with them. I cannot talk Hebrew, and my German was not equal to continuing the discussion with our guide, who spoke little English, so I can still think that a child is happier with its own mother, however poor the home may be ; although I quite see that for economic reasons, it may not be possible.

At another Colony we were taken to the school where the children go when they leave the Babies' Home, and where, so far as we could see, girls and boys learn and live and do everything together. When one remembers the crowded ghettos in Europe from which many of the Colonists come, one can only admire the way they are trying to

build a better future for the coming generations, in spite of overwhelming difficulties. It was when Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, that the men 'laboured by day, and guarded against their enemies by night.' And so does history repeat itself.

Lights are out in hospital, and the day-staff off duty at last. A shot rings out, then another. Arabs firing from a near-by hill. In a few moments the police are replying, then the soldiers who are quartered in the outskirts of the town. Then a machine-gun starts; and for an hour or so one lies in bed and wonders what is going to happen. The little Syrian night-nurse comes in.

'Are the patients frightened?'

'Oh! no. They say to me, "Nurse, you are here, you will take care of us."'

Nurse is quite unconcerned, and soon brings me a cup of tea—the nurse's unfailing remedy all the world over, for any trouble of mind or body. A little later: 'It is all over now.'

And the hospital settles down again. But one patient at least cannot sleep. Every dog in the neighbourhood has started barking, and every donkey braying. Then it is time for the cocks to start crowing, and the hospital starts its day by 5 a.m. Patients wander on to the verandah, and their relations and friends passing along to the town, settle themselves down in the dusty road for lengthy conversations, shouting across the garden, until a sister appears and drives them away.

The English staff is short-handed, so there is no sister on night-duty, but they take it in turn to be 'on call,' and hardly a night passes without steps on the gravel outside. The tired sister passing to one or other of the wards, having been sent for by one of the nurses, who have only had

perhaps two years' training, and are very young. How these girls pass their examinations is a marvel, for they are Armenians or Jews or Syrians, and they do the papers in English. Their training speaks volumes for the staff and doctors who lecture to them.

Another night I hear the doctor being called. An Arab has been brought in—gun-shot wounds ; or a policeman wounded in one of these senseless, useless attacks which somehow remind me of Lewis Carroll's lines—

*He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases.*

But it is more than that when villages are terrorised by armed gangsters, and cars held-up, and soldiers and civilians murdered in cold blood, and there is no security anywhere. The strain for those in authority must be almost unbearable as the months go on, and a peaceful settlement seems no nearer. Unless one has seen something of the work of the Colonial Office out in Palestine, and of the police, one can have no idea what it means to govern a country divided against itself.

But in the Mission Hospital the Jew may find himself lying by an Arab, for all are treated alike within its walls. An Arab policeman brought in badly wounded through a gun accidentally discharged by a fellow-policeman—a Jew—is anxious to explain, desperately ill though he is, that it was entirely an accident and that the Jew was not to blame.

Visiting days in the hospital are noisy occasions ! The hospital now makes a charge of a piastre or two for each visitor, but it does not seem to have reduced the numbers ; and all talk at once, and at the top of their voices.

Sister comes into my room.

' Oh ! how I long for a hospital at home, where one

does not have to collect money ! Did you hear that alteration ? I had to try and get £2 out of an Arab before his wife is operated on. We know he can afford to pay ; but they always try it on, and if we let them off, they spread the good news, and we should never get any money at all !’

‘ Did you get it this time ? ’ I ask.

‘ Only by threatening to turn the wife out of bed ! ’

‘ Wasn’t the poor woman very uncomfortable over it all ? ’ I enquire sympathetically.

‘ Oh ! no, she went on munching a dreadful-looking piece of meat he had brought her ; quite unconcerned. ’

I wonder whether the husband of a patient we had seen in another hospital had been persuaded to pay for his wife. Both her arms were broken. She had sold a piece of land in her husband’s absence, and so he had broken her arms.

No wonder, when I ask what the women talk about all day, sister replies :

‘ About their husbands principally ; whether they are kind to them ; what the other wife is like—if he is rich enough to have more than one—and about their children. ’

Early one morning the little night-nurse brings in a gaily-coloured bundle. Inside is a baby, a darling little brown thing, just born in the theatre beyond my room. The mother is only 16 years old ; but the baby is a boy, so she is proud and happy, and her husband will be pleased with her. Her mother had been allowed to sleep in the hospital, on condition that she stopped moaning and crying in sympathy with her daughter.

It is right that the hospital should make those pay who can afford to do so ; and they tell me that sometimes months after a patient has been treated, he will arrive with a sheep as a gift because he could not pay anything at the

time. We went one day to the little Church of the Loaves and Fishes, close by Tabgha where is the Hospice described in H. Morton's *In the Steps of the Master*. When Mr. Morton was there, Father Tapper had only recently discovered the mosaics, and was hoping to build a roof over them, to make them safe for ever. This is now done, and a Bedouin woman from a very poor encampment, quite near the little church, showed us the way, and opened the door for us. One of the hospital sisters was with us, and was able to translate what the woman said when I offered her a small present. She drew herself up, saying : ' It would be a sin to take money from anyone who comes from the hospital, where they were good to me and my baby.' So we had met one Arab who refused baksheesh !

We met another that same day who refused an offering for the same reason—one of the two Franciscan fathers who live by the ruins of the Synagogue at the supposed Capernaum. They too had found healing in the hospital of a church not their own ; and so sister must pay nothing for her friends when they visited the ruins. These instances mean a good deal in these troubled days, when tourists are afraid to come to Palestine and money is scarce. A few parties we see, passing in cars through Tiberias, escorted by an armoured car ; but they have to hurry over their sight-seeing, for nobody can be on the roads after dark.

Night falls once more on the Sea of Galilee ; but there is a glorious moon which makes a silver pathway across the water. The silence is broken by the noise of engines starting, and something that looks like a great bird, skims into sight on the lake. The next moment it is in the air, and away over the distant hills. It is the Imperial Airways flying-boat, and this is the first time it has taken off at midnight from Tiberias, to make its record flight—England to

India in two days and a few hours. So the little night-nurse and I are watching history in the making.

But as all is still and motionless on the lake once more, I see two fishing-boats, and in the moonlight the fishermen are casting their nets, just as they did nineteen hundred years ago.

THE INTERPRETER.

(TO ANDRÉ MAUROIS)

*Who can translate the cold and cryptic letter
Into the living stream of native speech—
He is the hope whereby the world grows better,
And nations learn what statesmen seldom teach.*

*Out of the shock, the shambles, and the terror,
In whose fell smoke the wit of genius delves,
There comes a voice in recompense of error
To tell us truths unlearnt about ourselves.*

*Through conflict's aftermath of doubt and grieving,
While statecraft sways, and newer thunders roll,
We hold him staunch who keeps his faith, perceiving
The voiceless humours of our island soul.*

*While out of eastern skies the death-storm dashes,
One steadfast friend, who braves the grim advance,
Can see, with eyes unblinded by the flashes,
That England rides the fickle flood with France.*

G. D. MARTINEAU.

TRUE SEA STORIES.

BY CAPPY RICKS.

I.

ALTHOUGH sailors have always been accused of being superstitious, they have, I venture to think, more reason for their beliefs than have the vast majority of other people. Thirty-five years spent at sea have taught me never to discredit any tale without first making it subject to investigation, for I have both seen and experienced things on board ship which surpass many of the so-called supernatural occurrences of the séance-chamber.

There was the time, for instance, when I was in command of the old clipper barque, *Childers*, bound from Melbourne to the Cape with a cargo of wheat ; a thousand miles out, and when off the southern coast of Western Australia, we ran into the thick of a southern winter gale.

Great pyramidal seas smote and battered the ship, to keep the decks full almost from rail to rail, over three long drawn-out weeks of what was nothing less than torture to the weary crew who fought throughout in wet and sodden clothing, and were without hot food during the whole of that time, the galley having early been gutted out in the onslaught.

One morning, just as day was breaking in a dull, leaden sky, above a dreary, gale-wreaked waste of waters we shipped a monstrous sea, which smashed a lifeboat, carried away most of the lee bulwarks, and dashed in the wooden 'break' of the poop, and I realised that we were in for a proper dusting.

During the following twenty-four hours while her seawounds were being dressed, the *Childers* would most certainly have foundered but for a beneficent dispensation of Providence. The cargo in the damaged poop swelled on becoming wet, and partially forced back the damaged bulkhead, and filled somewhat the leaks.

The pumps were kept manned by weary automata, who fought manfully against the increasing water in the hold, and it was in the small hours of one of these endless nights that ship and crew were saved certain disaster by the first mate, who had a dream.

The first watch had still more than an hour to go, when in the murk I caught sight of him clawing his way to where I stood under the weather cloth of the shrouds of the mizzen rigging.

‘What’s the matter, Mr. Handsford?’ I yelled, for the wind was of almost hurricane force. ‘It is not your watch yet, you still have an hour’s bunk in front of you.’

‘Oh, I could not sleep, sir. Not after that terrible dream. I saw the ship running straight on top of three black rocks, with white tops.’

Now, although flying sights of the sun had been obtained on the preceding day we were none too sure of our position, owing to the drag of unseen currents, but I knew that, some seventy miles to leeward of where I supposed the ship to be, there were three such rocks, exactly as the mate had described.

Although not a believer in the supernatural, I felt distinctly disquieted by the incident, and, as we were still standing with head inshore, for that reason alone I remained on deck after midnight instead of going below, and shortly afterwards reduced sail to be on the safe side, although even then the gale showed signs of moderating.

Suddenly there came in an agonised hail from the foreyard, where the crew were furling the foresail. 'Breakers on the lee bow,' followed by a moment later, in a scream from the fo'c'sle-head buried in the murk and flying spin-drift: 'Breakers on the weather bow, close to.'

The position seemed entirely hopeless; any alteration of course in either direction would at once impale the ship upon one of the 'white-topped rocks,' which loomed in the darkness, above two diamond white lines of leaping surf.

Our only possible chance of safety seemed to be to steer for the short black line, ~~less than a hundred yards in length~~, that lay between the gleaming white, and take the risk of there being in it any isolated rocks, the black fangs of which were now to be seen protruding through the surf on either beam.

Those few moments when we appeared about to strike seemed an eternity, and every man of the crew clung to anything within reach, tensed for the crash which would mean immediate and total dissolution.

First one rock came abeam, less than a biscuit toss to windward, its lee side a tumbling, leaping mass of cascade of surf, driven over its 70-feet peak, and the diapason of the falling seas struck the ear-drums like a blow; and then, a few tense moments later, the flying ship, now in broken water, passed the other one in its stride, and, by a seeming miracle, was through the passage and again in deep water, though the rocks must have scraped her very keel. A minute later and she was brought gently to the wind and sea with her head off-shore, to stand once more to the southward in the face of thousand-league storm-driven and grey-bearded seas, yet into comparative safety.

Not for a mint of money would I again go through the

terrifying sensations of those few minutes—about two, though they seemed an age.

‘ Good job you had that dream, Mr. Handsford. Let me know should you ever have another such, please.’

.

II.

Many people pour scorn upon sailormen’s ‘ yarns,’ regarding them as old wives’ tales, but they are not always so, by any means, and I may point to a case where a wrecked crew were saved in truly miraculous circumstances from certain death by what may be described as a waking dream. It is quite possible that there may be some rational explanation of the affair, but certain it is that had not Captain Roberts had faith in himself and his convictions those he saved would long since have sank to the sea-floor off the Horn.

The *Superb* was not a sea-kindly vessel, being what sailormen in their more guarded moments call a ‘ diving-bell,’ submarine, or man-killer, and in unguarded moments things that are not to be found in dictionaries. An old clipper, she had a good turn of speed, and at the time of the occurrence was reeling off the knots to the westward after passing the grim promontory’s outstretched forefinger with a bone of mighty proportions in her teeth.

The night of Favonius had a few hours before given place to a south-easter, and the ship’s bow was pointed to a less inclement region.

The last of the topgallant-sails was set by midnight, and Captain Roberts walked the weather poop with the first mate until two bells struck. He then bade his companion a cheery good night, and made for the chart-room, there to look at the chart and verify the course so recently set ; tap the barometer now standing high to the polar wind ; read

the satisfying midnight entry on the log-slate, and then lie down to sleep on the settee. What awoke him he never could tell, but suddenly he had an uncomfortable and undefinable feeling that he was not alone.

Then he saw the shape of the mate leaning over the chart-table, and yet, somehow, was aware that it wasn't the mate ; no member of his crew was this.

Raising himself upon an elbow he challenged the figure, and was amazed to see a tall fair man, with face drawn and pale, a slight moustache and beard, and a look of deep anxiety in his eyes. He wore rough yet good clothing, Scandinavian leather jacket, flapped cap and long thigh sea-boots, and the Captain knew on the instant that he had never seen him before in his life. A shiver ran down his spine and the hair of his neck commenced to bristle as he watched the unknown, moving as though accustomed to his surroundings, and with a manner suggesting the habit of command, walk out of the chart-room.

Leaping up, Captain Roberts ran over to the chart-table. There on the log-slate was a message ; an order, newly scrawled by a wet forefinger—' Steer N.N.W '

Within two seconds he was out on the poop. Dashing up to the mate under the weather cloth in the mizzen shrouds, he shouted : ' Where's that man who was in the chart-room a moment ago ? Where is he ? I want to see him,' and the mate, slow of speech, found his shoulder being shaken by a perplexed and angry commander.

' Man,' echoed the mate, ' there's been no man in the chart-room but yourself, and no one on the poop but the helmsman and myself since you left it.'

He looked closely at the Captain as though suspecting that he had suddenly lost his reason, but the Captain caught him by the arm and dragged him into the chart-room.

'What's that?' he demanded, pointing to the now drying characters on the slate, 'look for yourself.'

'Sort o' wet scribble, I should say, done by yourself.'

Captain Roberts controlled himself by an effort, and told his story, but it was altogether too unconvincing for the mate, and the Captain, leaving matters as they stood, went to his bed, but not to sleep. Through his tired brain there went ever on and on the refrain, 'Steer N.N.W. Steer N.N.W.,' the while his closed eyes saw the drying writing on a slate.

Noon, and the Captain took the sun and pricked off the ship's position on the chart. Then, with a new set to firm shoulders, he strode to the 'break' of the poop, and, in a voice that reverberated along the decks that all might hear, gave the order, 'Square the crojack yard.' And, to the man at the wheel, 'Up helm. Steer N.N.W.'

He had taken his fence squarely; he knew that by so doing his officers and crew would think the 'Old Man' had suddenly gone mad, but he had faced all that in the reflections of the long forenoon.

He walked the poop, pausing every few minutes to sweep with his binoculars the unbroken horizon, searching for he knew not what; when from aloft there came a hail, 'Iceberg right ahead.'

Shortly the berg was in sight from the poop, and on every sweep of the glass it came into the Captain's vision. Later, a dark blur showed just above water-line on the crystal peril, and slowly, slowly, there came to the Captain the conviction that he had found that for which he searched.

The blur resolved itself into a group of huddled figures, and from this a form detached itself and waved an arm, and then it was that the Captain was vindicated.

'All hands on deck. Clew up topgallant-sails. Let go

all jib and staysail halliards. Clew up the courses. Back the main-yards. Lower the starboard lifeboat,' and away sped the boat on its errand of mercy.

The wreck had occurred on the preceding evening ; the ship, a large Norwegian, head-reaching in a prolonged squall, had struck the berg head on, to become a wreck on the instant. Jib-boom and bows crumpled up, and down came the masts and yards, killing a number of the crew in their fall, but seventeen people, including the Captain's wife, had managed to scramble down the raffle of rigging overlying the bows and reach the comparative safety of the berg before the ship slid off the ice-reef into deep water.

No provisions or extra clothing had been saved, and the plight of the castaways seemed almost as inevitable and certain as if they had gone down with their ship ; they were saved by the one-in-a-million chance that Old Ocean does sometimes accord his victims.

The first person handed over the rail was the Captain's wife. The last to come was the Captain, a tall, fair man, with face drawn and pale, wearing a slight moustache and beard, clad in rough clothing with leather jacket and cap, and long thigh-boots. As he stepped down to the deck Captain Roberts came forward, his eyes riveted on the man's face.

'Captain,' said the stranger, advancing with outstretched hand, 'we are very grateful, to you we owe our lives ;' and then, with a glance of interrogation, 'but, surely, we have met before ?'

'Yes,' replied the 'old man,'—'I think we have ; at one o'clock this morning.'

NAPOLEON BEFORE DÜRNSTEIN.

BY HERBERT CHAMBERLAIN.

THE Danube, May 1809. Thus far, in the Wagram campaign, Napoleon had defeated the Austrians under the Archduke Charles in the minor battles of Abensburg, Landshut, Eggmühl, and Ratisbon. The loss of the last, a few days before, had resolved the Archduke to cross the Danube to the northern (left) bank, and retire eastward through Bohemia upon Vienna. Napoleon, however, still keeping to the same bank of the river, had continued his advance down it towards the capital with the left flank of his army under Marshal Davoût, to halt one evening at the little market town of Rossatz.

It was obvious to Napoleon's staff that his attention was strongly attracted to the opposite side of the Danube, where, almost facing them, nearly three-quarters of a mile off, across the waters swollen by recent torrential rains, was another small town very prettily situated. It contained a splendid Augustinian abbey and a seventeenth-century schloss. But upon the high, rocky hillside above it was the magnificent ruin of a mediæval castle, connected with the town by the latter's walls, which had been carried up the rock towards the fortress. Although, perhaps, the Emperor's staff could not discern as much, it was at this latter that he was looking so fixedly through his glass, while, with the light of the setting sun on its tumbled walls and shattered towers, it wore probably its most imposing aspect. He gazed for such a period that they began to think he would never look away. He did so at last, but only to fall

into a deep reverie that lasted every bit as long, while they watched, silent behind him in their saddles.

Many a famous personage was in that group of officers. There was the stern Davoût, the finest organiser and best disciplinarian of all Napoleon's generals. Active, ugly little Marshal Berthier, the Emperor's chief of staff almost throughout his career, sat there eyeing him with an almost dog-like devotion. Marshal Lannes was there, the kindly, courageous officer whose death a few weeks later at Aspern-Essling reduced Napoleon to tears. General Mouton, who had stormed Landshut at the head of the grenadiers, and was soon to be created Marshal Count Labau for his work at the island of that name lower down the river ; General Bertrand, the brilliant engineer officer who followed his chief to St. Helena, now aide-de-camp to him with Mouton and others—many such notable figures were in that silent group.

At last Napoleon lowered his telescope, and turned to face them, a somewhat eager light in his sensitive, dark-grey eyes. 'Messieurs,' he said, pointing backward with the glass, 'do you know that place, and what happened there ?'

'Yes, sire,' replied Lannes promptly, his expressive, pleasing face lighting up ; 'it is Dürnstein, where Marshal Mortier's small force cut its way through the Austrian and Russian troops when we——'

'Yes, yes,' interrupted the Emperor impatiently, 'that was a great feat, and few troops beside mine could have performed it. But I was alluding to that ruined castle. What was it that happened *there* ?' He glanced from face to face quickly, frowned a little at the blank looks that met him, and then smiled. 'Eh bien ! my generals know enough about geography to enable me to win my battles ; history seems to be another matter ! L'histoire ! it has been my most profound inspiration, without which I should not have

become the Emperor of France and master of Europe. . . . None of you know the significance of that ruin? Not you, Lannes, who are a student?—nor you, Berthier? . . . But I am mistaken; of course you know the story; it is too much, no doubt, to expect you to remember the scene of it. Ah! Marbot, I see you do; you should have spoken out. Now—what happened at that castle over there?’

‘It is the place, sire,’ replied young Captain Marbot, an aide-de-camp of Lannes, ‘where Richard Cœur-de-Lion was imprisoned in the Middle Ages, when he was captured by the Archduke of Austria while returning from the Crusade.’

‘You are right,’ said Napoleon seriously. . . . And why has Cœur-de-Lion a particular interest for me—can you tell me that, messieurs?’

‘He was a great soldier, sire,’ suggested Berthier tentatively.

‘Quite true,’ said Napoleon decidedly. ‘And as a great soldier, he did a thing that I of all men shall never cease to envy.’ He looked round the group questioningly for a moment; then approached his horse close to Lannes, and laid his hand softly on the Marshal’s shoulder. ‘Lannes, mon ami, you bear to this day an unfortunate memorial of the thing I failed to do, yet which Cœur-de-Lion accomplished. What was it?’

Lannes stared perplexedly at the Emperor for a long moment—then clapped his hand to his neck, which had been bent over his left shoulder by a wound received ten years before. ‘He captured Acre, sire!’ he cried.

‘He captured Acre,’ affirmed Napoleon; ‘with the help of the other Christian princes, who owed that victory to his martial energy and skill, he captured Acre—that sacré

Syrian town that barred my way to the empire I should otherwise have founded in the East.'

Napoleon took up his quarters for the night at an eighteenth-century schloss in Rossatz; and it was there that he sat at dinner that evening, dominating as usual, despite his physical insignificance and the shabbiness of his old chasseur uniform, the brilliant circle of his officers. When the meal was over, he sat for some time musing. Then he rose abruptly, and took a slow turn or two up and down the chamber, his chin sunk upon his breast, and his hands clasped behind him. Next he reassumed his chair the other way round, his legs astraddle, and his chin resting on his plump, white hands folded upon the back, while he gazed into vacancy. His officers, who had followed his movement the instant he first rose, now respectfully remained standing. After a brief space he again stood up, and then suddenly flung off his silence and delivered his thoughts in speech.

'What is destiny, messieurs?—what are fate, chance, Fortune? How far can we believe in them as irresistible forces directing the human race? When we see, for instance, that some soldiers go into battle after battle and emerge untouched, while others no more reckless than they seldom escape without a wound, is it not hard to disbelieve that each one is actually selected by some unknown means for his own particular destiny? I believe in destiny; but its final intent is too obscure and far removed for human discernment. It is the ultimate inscrutable purpose of which Fortune, the goddess of chance, is the present instrument; but the latter, always a mystery to people of mediocre intelligence, becomes, to the clear-sighted, a tangible reality. I can calculate the hazards of a battle with almost as much precision as the factors in a mathematical problem. Fortune is a woman

indeed, and, *my* old heart knowing all humanity for what it is, few of her womanly secrets are hidden from me. I know her, and am able to judge her moods, and circumvent her caprices. The more she has given me, the more I have demanded. But sometimes she is a strumpet, and then indeed she is able to foil me.

‘Look at Acre ! Was it not like a faithless, loose, and vile woman, when Fortune contrived that my siege train should be taken by the English at sea, and used against me at Acre when I needed it to capture that miserable place ? . . . If I had taken Acre, I should have made my way to Aleppo by forced marches, and have enlisted Christians, Druses, and Armenians. Then I should speedily have reached the Euphrates, have gone on to India, have established new institutions everywhere, and have become Emperor of the East. . . . But circumstances were against me. And when my army began to retreat to Egypt, I remained behind for a long while on an eminence, looking back at the place which had wrecked my hopes ; and I said, “The most beloved dream of my life—it is gone !”’

The Emperor had been pacing slowly up and down during his discourse, looking, for the most part, slightly upward, but shooting an occasional glance at one or other of the company. During the silence that followed his conclusion, he continued thus for a moment or two ; and then, noticing the look on the face of Duroc, his Grand Marshal and close friend, he asked, ‘Well, Duroc, of what are you thinking ?’

‘Your Majesty,’ replied the latter, ‘left the East in order to return to France, which just then had the greatest need of you. And since that time you have made an empire from the half of Europe.’

‘Ta, ta, ta,’ said Napoleon impatiently, and his voice was harsh, ‘this little Europe does not supply enough glory for me. I had to seek it in the East—all great fame comes from there.’ He fell into a frowning silence, during which he took several rapid pinches of snuff in half-agitated fashion, spilling most of it over his clothes. Then the gloom suddenly vanished from his face, and he resumed calmly :

‘We spoke, a while since, of Cœur-de-Lion, did we not ? and I compared his fortune at Acre with my own. You have not, of course, reflected that there is a considerable parallel between that monarch of long ago and myself. Richard was an English monarch, and although born in England, he was by birth really a Frenchman, and by training entirely so ; while I am a French monarch, and yet by birth and upbringing really a Corsican. He had a great deal of my energy and skill in war. He spent most of his life in fighting, from choice ; and I have to spend much of my time in fighting, from necessity (to keep what I have gained). And finally—most interesting thought !—Richard had to hurry home from the East, and he was captured by his enemy on the way ; and *I* had to hurry home from the East, and the English in their cruisers nearly captured *me* !’

Napoleon’s officers, who had listened attentively to this comparison, now smiled at his laughing conclusion. He looked from face to face half eagerly. ‘There is a considerable similarity, is there not ?’ he asked.

‘There is indeed, sire,’ agreed Lannes. ‘And Your Majesty’s last parallel reminds me how anxiously we made our cautious way back through the Mediterranean, hoping to avoid Nelson’s ships. How calamitous it would have been for France had you been taken, and shut up in an English prison.’

‘But you would have escaped, sire,’ Dorsenne, a general officer of the Guard, stoutly ventured to say.

‘Eh bien ! I believe I should have had to do so,’ returned the Emperor, smiling and pinching the General’s ear (his most certain sign of pleasure with anybody); ‘for the English would have thought me too dangerous to exchange, and ransoming is no longer the thing, as it was in Richard’s day. It is an interesting thought, n’est-ce pas ?’ He rubbed his hands together briskly. ‘Mais oui, that is an interesting thought ! But according to legend, Richard had a Blondel, who carried the news of his whereabouts to England ; should I have had one to help me escape from there ? Which of you would have played Blondel for me ?’ His eye travelled whimsically round the group of smiling faces, and came to rest inquiringly on Duroc.

‘Ma foi !’ said the latter, ‘I rather think, sire, that the one most capable of playing under your prison window, as Blondel did under Cœur-de-Lion’s, would have been General Saint-Cyr, with his violin !’

The circle of smiles became one of grins, and someone laughed outright ; for the extremely competent Saint-Cyr, greatly disliked though he was by nearly everyone, including Napoleon himself, on account of his egotism and ascetic habits, aroused much amusement by the way he shut himself up to play his instrument for days together at every opportunity.

Napoleon also was greatly entertained. ‘Parbleu !’ he exclaimed, with a mischievous smile, ‘you are right. Saint-Cyr, I think, is too cold to do anything for any person but himself ; but if it enabled him to indulge his master passion, he would perhaps welcome even such an extravagant occasion as that !’

HAND IN HAND WITH DEATH.

BY C. T. STONEHAM.

CHIP RILEY came out of the gambling-house in Mozambique, a sinister grin on his lean wolfish face. He left two dead men behind him. It was midnight, the sandy thoroughfare was deserted. They had all run for cover when he started shooting. They had tried to take him for the contents of his wallet—him, Chip Riley, who had been bodyguard to the most notorious big-shot in the Chicago booze war ! It made him smile. That yellow rat ought not to have pulled a knife ; he'd only got what was coming to him.

Chip could not remember how many men he had killed. Another couple did not worry him, but the consequences might be serious. He had no pull here. How did one dodge the rap in a country like this ?

He could not go back to the ship, of course. Well, there must be some way out—there always was a way out for Chip Riley. He put the thirty-eight back in his pocket and walked quickly along the street, staring at the dark wooden houses and the vacant plots between.

Under a tree the black bulk of a car showed. He took a look at it. It had an open box-body in which was a pile of blankets, two full sacks, and two petrol tins, heavy. Switching on the dash light he saw the ignition key in its socket and the gauge marking a tank three-parts full. It would do.

Not a voice was raised as he drove off through the native quarter, heading inland. He did not know where he was going, and did not care much, so long as he got clear away

from that house and the hostile witnesses. A smart guy could always make out.

The head-lights showed the track flat and wide running between plains of bush. He was out in the country. It was dry weather, and the going fine; the moon was so bright you hardly needed the lamps. Chip settled down comfortably, humming a tune in time to the purring engine. This was better than the stuffy cabin, he'd say it was! All them little dagoes looking for him, and him on his way, out into Africa!

Towards dawn he grew sleepy. The road was not so good, there were steep dongas to cross and the culverts had been washed out by the last floods. Still, the car managed it, ploughing through sand, tilting at preposterous angles. The head-lights showed antelopes, and queer shaggy animals like large dogs. They all got out of the way, so why worry?

Just before the light came the car stopped, having run out of gasolene. Chip got out stiffly and took a tin from the back. It was a four-gallon tin; it looked as if it had been opened and soldered up again. Chip was a bit worried at that. He found cold chisel and hammer in the tool-box and opened the tin. It was full of somethick yellow grease—ghee, but Chip did not know that. The second tin was the same.

He stood cogitating. The automobile ride was over. He must be a good bit more than a hundred miles from the town, and things were not so bad. He must walk now, but where to? During that drive he had not seen a human habitation.

He rummaged in the back of the car. The sacks contained potatoes, but there was a canvas bag with a loaf of bread, tins of fish, and the materials for making tea. Sitting on the running-board he ate bread and sardines.

The dawn broke cold and grey. About him was bush, dry, desiccated stuff, thick over a flat plateau. Far away were some hills, and they also seemed covered with the same sort of bush. Here and there was an enormous tree, with bare writhen branches, pulpy looking : more like a monstrous vegetable than a tree. Some country !

He lit a Camel, took the food bag and a blanket, and started off along the road. His spirits were low, but he was tough all right ; it would take more than this to get him down. In the bushes stood a giraffe, its head towering an incredible height, its soft eyes regarding the man curiously. Along the road one of those dog-animals confronted him ; it was spotted, had a mane on its neck, and big round ears. He realised it must be a hyena and was relieved when it loped away. The place was like a zoo. Well, he had the gun and two spare clips, so that was all right.

As he trudged along the sun rose and at once the nyika became hot and glaring. Chip stepped out with renewed vigour ; everything was more cheerful. If he could find a village he would force the natives to guide him and supply him with food. He would cross the border, find a town, and spin a yarn to procure assistance. A guy with plenty of gall and sufficient money was all right. In his ignorance he proposed to himself a journey lasting months, through the wilderness, lacking equipment.

The road went down hill to a river. It was cold and clear, Chip drank with enjoyment. A narrow trail led along the bank ; natives lived near rivers. He would hunt up some of these black rascals and make them work.

There were a thousand chances that he would have lost his way and starved to death in that bush, but by sheer luck he eventually found a village. It was late afternoon, he had been walking all day and was sick of it. Sounds of

axe-strokes and laughter reached him, he hurried forward into the midst of a group of huts in a clearing by the river. Women were pounding grain before their doors, men were loafing in the shade. Mangy dogs rushed forward, barking hysterically.

Chip dumped his burden and stretched himself. 'Well, folks, I've come!' he announced, and dropped his right hand into his pocket.

There was a babble of speech, the women dived into the huts, dragging children with them, the men stared and would not approach. Then Chip saw the chief coming, threading a way among his gesticulating subjects.

The chief was an old man, with grey wool on scalp and chin. He walked up to the stranger, staring at him in an unfriendly way. Then he said something in Portuguese.

'No speak-um,' Chip told him.

In a deep voice the native enquired: 'Where you come from?'

'You speak-a da English, eh? That's fine!' the American applauded.

'I speak little. Three years K.A.R. boy—soldier in Tanganyika.'

'That's where I want to go,' said Chip with satisfaction. 'You can take me to Tanganyika; you and some of these other niggers. It'll be a nice little job for you.'

The chief regarded him in astonishment.

'Well, why not?' snarled Chip wickedly.

'Plenty long safari. Bad people on road.'

'But we're going, sweetheart.' The pistol came out and pointed at the chief's stomach. 'The police are after me, see? I gotta get away, and you're going to help. Don't get saucy, 'cos I'd as soon plug you as not. Maybe it would wake these dumb-bells up a bit.'

The chief raised protecting hands. Chip had seen such gestures before, but they had never stopped a bullet. Suddenly he received a violent blow on his bent elbow, almost breaking it. He spun round, the gun dropping at his feet. A native had stolen up behind him and struck him with a club.

The chief grabbed the pistol, which, evidently, he knew how to use: Chip raised his hands to the level of his shoulders. He was in a hot spot—not for the first time.

‘You want kill me, eh?’ said the chief unpleasantly. ‘Suppose I kill you?’

Chip sneered. ‘You daren’t do that; I’m a white man. Gimme that gun!’ He glared ferociously. ‘Listen, nig; I don’t scare easy. A newspaper man in Chicago said I’d walked hand in hand with death since I was knee-high. He was right. You don’t bluff me a dime’s worth.’

His bluster was to conceal his growing perturbation. A score of men had gathered round, handling their spears suggestively. There was a smile on the chief’s face, a smile the white man did not like.

‘In your own place you walk hand in hand with death. You shall do that here. You are such brave man, huh?’ The chief spat contemptuously. He gave an order. In a few minutes his men appeared dragging the body of a large baboon.

‘We kill this monkey last night. He will be company for you.’

^a Hedged round with spears the prisoner was hustled into the bush. ‘Taking me for a ride, eh?’ he jeered desperately, and then was silent, watchful as a weasel.

In a glade the procession stopped. They strapped Chip’s left hand behind him with strips of raw-hide, his right hand was bound firmly to that of the dead baboon.

‘Now walk to Tanganyika, white man,’ scoffed the chief. ‘There are bad lions, but you will not fear, for you walk with death as with a comrade.’

Laughing immoderately at the joke, they left him.

He stood listening for a minute. Then it was quiet ; he was alone. The dead weight of the baboon tugged at his arm, already the body gave off an unpleasant smell. Sure, he was in a jamb, but he was still alive, and that was hopeful. He would have to give himself up now and take what was coming. The river must lie away to the left, he could follow it to the road. The niggers thought themselves smart, but he wasn’t beat yet. Chip Riley was a hard guy to beat.

He started off, dragging the carcass over the rough ground. It must weigh more than a hundred pounds, it caught in grass and bushes. He made an attempt to get it up on his shoulder, but failed.

By the time he reached the river it was dark and he was very tired. He sat on a rock to rest, averting his face from his gruesome companion, wondering when the moon would rise. Strange birds were calling along the river and there was rustling in the bushes. He guessed that fellow had been trying to scare him about lions, they weren’t so common. But he hated the thought of those hyenas, though he had been told they were timid beasts.

The moon came up as he sat there, the place became light as a dawn in snow-time—like when he drove the car the night they gave Benny Lusky the works. Benny had wished him a bad finish ; it would be just too bad if Benny’s hopes worked out right. Yes, that sort of sheen on the grass looked like snow all right. It wasn’t too warm, either.

A shadow detached itself from the bushes and moved into plain view. It was a hyena. It stood staring ten

yards away, then it put up its head and howled like a mad coon. Answering cries, weird and unearthly, came from three different points in the bush.

‘Scram, you brute!’ yelled Chip. The hyena flinched and ran into the bushes. ‘Yellow!’ said Chip with spurious contempt. He had to act a part, even to himself.

In a few minutes four of them appeared, and they growled at him ferociously. He shouted and moved his shoulders violently, and they ran a few steps. Then they began to laugh: high shrieks of ghastly mirth, like a bunch of hysterical dames—like Benny’s girl when they pulled him away from her and shoved him into the car. Chip raved at them, but they made more noise than he could.

They were sneaking close; he found himself sweating and shivering. They could tear a man to pieces, like dogs with a rabbit. He could not get away.

A new sound obtruded, a deep, mournful note, far off. Chip knew what made it—a lion! The hyenas fell silent, but soon they began to squeak and titter again. That lion was coming, Chip felt sure of it. He got up and began to tow his burden along the river trail. It was a long way to the road and the car. Could he make it? With teeth clenched and lungs labouring, he struggled on.

A sudden tug at his arm almost upset him. A hyena had hold of a trailing leg of the baboon. Chip kicked at the beast; it let go to growl at him, another caught hold. He was being dragged about like a child on the end of a lead: they were hauling him away into the bush. He yelled, and fought frantically. If those stinking brutes got him into the shadows they would eat him alive. Three of them were pulling against him now, he could not hold his ground. Then they ran off, snarling.

Chip stood gasping, shaking with horror. He heard

another sort of growl, deep, blood-curdling. Plain in the moonlight a few yards away was a big maned lion. It looked enormous. Its head was held low; it was the embodiment of threatening savagery. Chip knew a real big-shot when he saw one, and he thought in all his life he had never seen one so ruthless, so conscious of evil power.

Screaming, he blundered off along the trail, the carcass bumping behind him as if no more than a feather pillow. He heard the rush of feet and a terrible stunning roar—then he was halted with a jerk that almost dislocated his shoulder. The lion had seized the baboon. It stood threatening him, in the moonlight its eyes glowed with horrible intensity. ‘It’s like a cat when it thinks you’re going to take away its meat,’ thought the man. ‘God! it’s going to tear my head off!’

The lion walked into the bush carrying the meat. Chip was dragged after it, helpless as a puppy. Where was it taking him? To some dark, gloomy thicket, probably, to devour him at its leisure. There was no escape, no hope of mercy. It was ‘taking him for a ride.’ The cynical, mocking idiom rose to his mind: a memory of days when he played the rôle of remorseless killer, and was equally merciless. He could face bullets—but this! Everything went black about him; he felt himself falling.

The swoon must have merged into the deep sleep of exhaustion, for when he awoke another of those chill dawns was stealing over the bush-veld. He was very stiff and cold—but free. That was the first realisation. Of that carcass to which he had been tethered only a fragment of bone and flesh remained attached to his aching wrist. He had lain as one dead while the lion feasted beside him. The knowledge overwhelmed him with horror.

He could not understand why the beast had spared him ; likely it thought him dead. He was not the first to be puzzled by the aversion shown by some lions to human flesh. He guessed the presence of the big-shot had kept the hyenas off, anyway—just like him and the boys would have to keep away from the big fellow's meat in the old days. Suddenly he saw himself as a sneaking scavenger, picking up a living in the arch-assassin's shadow : a hyena of the underworld.

'I guess I don't feel so good,' he moaned, as he rose to his feet drunkenly.

Walking was now simplified ; he set out for the road, still urged by panic. In an hour he encountered a party of police, natives, and two white men. They were on the trail of the fugitive, but stared aghast at this apparition, white-haired, and shaking like a leaf. The description had been of a younger man.

The senior officer addressed him in English : 'You are James Riley. I am here to arrest you.'

'Sure,' mumbled Chip. 'Go ahead. I'm pleased to see you.'

As they unbound his hands he stated : 'I know what's coming to me. You may hang me here, or send me home—and I shan't last long once the boys know I'm back. I don't care. Say, did you ever hear of a man tied to a lion's supper ? I reckoned I was tough, but this place is too tough for me. I want to feel a side-walk under my feet again. Take me along, boys ; Chip Riley's all washed up !'

Proceeding to the police lorry on the road, his thoughts returned to Benny Lusky, once his friend. Somewhere in hell Benny would be laughing, he reckoned.

TRUTH AND CHINESE BRUSH-WORK.

BY PROFESSOR L. W. LYDE.

FEW essays are quoted so often as the one containing Lord Bacon's famous gibe at Pontius Pilate ; but Bacon was unfair to him, doubly unfair. For, in asking 'What is Truth?', Pilate was far from 'jesting'; and *if* he 'would not stay for an answer,' it was because he did not expect one. His question was rhetorical, just the formulating of old doubts over which he and his wife had often pondered ; he knew that such a question could not be answered in a casual minute. Truth is not as simple as all that.

For truth must be ultimately subjective, and that means an insoluble problem ; but even the objective factor is far from simple, and it cannot be ignored. Different minds react to the same stimulus in different ways, and draw different conclusions. For instance, the Abyssinian Church drew a very different conclusion about Pilate, for it canonised him, as the Greek Church canonised his wife, Procula. He was canonised for his unshakable verdict—'I find no fault in this man.' Was that jesting ? Or was it not in accordance with the evidence ?

The same problem springs up everywhere, especially in the realm of Art. There the subjective must be dominant, even in landscape painting ; but that does not justify us in ignoring the actual landscape as an objective environment, as a 'control,' a stimulus, a cultural value. And, indeed, the old, so-called scientific obsession on that problem is dead. To-day modern ecology has destroyed the delusion which encouraged people to jeer at any suggestion of

geographic 'control' and human 'response' to such control. To-day physiology and psychology are agreed that there is a relation, a functional relation, between an organism and its environment; and, though we do not know how many millennia are needed to crystallise acquired characteristics into heritage, we may safely assume that the organism is most susceptible in its early stages of development.

That being so, if we wish to examine the unique sense of the appropriate in Chinese art, it may be useful to trace back the story of their differentiating characteristics; and there can be little doubt that the critical centuries were those of their great eastward trek from their Garden of Eden orchards to the treeless loess lands of the Yellow River basin, when they were the world's real pioneers in path-finding.

The point in which the Chinese are most clearly differentiated from other peoples is their unique geographical sense. This is possessed by all ranks, and is curiously associated with an equally widespread fear of being lost. Evidently, the ages of transcontinental drift 'controlled' both 'responses.' Mountain ranges and mighty rivers were natural landmarks along which to travel; those who ignored their guidance, and tried to take bee-lines to assumed objectives, were lost; and gradually the roughest piedmont of a mountain chain was preferred to the smoothest levels of the limitless steppes, and the survivors inherited an abiding gratitude to mountains and moving water as the twin Patron-Saints of Pathfinding.

But this was not merely a blind acceptance of facts. They added a firm belief in the essential function of geography as a training of the mind in visualisation, in the making of mental pictures of forms and forces—land forms and climatic forces—that are beyond the horizon; and the importance

of this belief lies in the fact that Chinese painting developed as an art based on visualisation and not on vision, on a mental picture and not on a nature study. This was true even when the subject was a landscape.

Some such historic development seems to explain, and is needed to explain, why in China one never fails to find an unerring instinct for artistic propriety ; and the gift partakes of genius, for it implies an infinite capacity for taking *creative* pains—a very different process from that of taking mechanical pains. Indeed, of all forms of insanity the most pernicious is that which betrays itself in the delusion that mechanical means and standardised minds can bring any perfection to human life.

In China one finds this genius in every sphere and through every stratum of ordinary life ; and, by a piece of supreme good fortune, you may have found complete conviction on the subject in a single afternoon.

It began with an invitation to see a collection of priceless pearls. They were found in a bare little room on its one piece of furniture, a table ; and the table was covered with a silk cloth of the purest grey colour that could not seem ' cold.'

On leaving the millionaire's, you meandered along Wu-Ni (' Five-Muds ') creek—which, like most meandering streams, is ' *very* muddy'—to a little shrine, a Christian chapel. You meandered, too, in a double sense, for the path indulges in its own zigzags in following the meanders of the water to ' Five Twists ' bridge. Devils, as you know, can move with devilish speed—in a straight line ; but they are clumsy at corners, sometimes actually paralysed by them. So, if your path and your bridge twist enough, you can thumb your nose to the fleetest of them, and arrive safely at the little shrine.

This is rather a marvellous little building, hallowed and decorated with coloured statuettes of the Virgin and her Child. She is robed in her own heavenly blue, and her little Son is a splash of gold with a pigtail, and the perfection of each detail and of the whole setting was enchanting. Of course, you smiled; but it was a wise and humble smile, and laughter was impossible.

Beside the evening fire you wished for some music, and you remembered having seen a tired-looking flautist resting by the archway as you entered the courtyard. You sent to see whether she was still there, and would play for you. Yes, she was still there, but humbly prayed to be excused because she was so tired that it would be 'a *sin* against the Honourable Flute'!

All that lies behind this wide distribution of so precious a gift is, perhaps, beyond the analysis of even experts with intimate knowledge of Chinese history and deep understanding of Chinese psychology; but there is some evidence that, at least to their best pictures, there is a definite background of historical geography.

What of the mysterious influence of Time, just Time itself, the silent leaven of 5,000 years? That at least reminds one that art is great only as it has in it something of universality. Great art can have no essential dependence on the differentiations of place and period; the supremacy of the Nude proves that. Except where survival has been thwarted by catastrophe, art that is universal cannot be ephemeral. At the same time it does not follow that all art which has survived is great; for in a stagnant civilisation there may have been nothing better to discredit and displace it. The stuff that has survived may have been only—in the meanest sense—*l'art des choses possibles*. As much bad verse may have been written in the England of Great

Elizabeth as in the China of Confucius ; but it was still-born, or went to swell an infantile death-rate.

In China this leavening influence of Time has been vitalised by the existence of an ideographic script. If the naïve supporters of phonetic spelling in England had agreed upon a 'perfect' system, and could impose it on us to-day, how long would it be before Durham and Devon were giving different values to the vowels, or before the thick-lipped and the thin-lipped persons in either county were giving different values to words containing labials ?

The conventional symbols of an alphabetic script, associated with phonetic values, must always be at the mercy of such accidents ; that unconscious tuning-up of the vocal chords which ruined the speech of islanders who settled on the Prairies, can be detected even in East Anglia during a long spell of dry weather. But the pictorial symbols of an ideographic script are untouched by such changes. The need to invent a new picture for every new idea may cramp the growth of a vocabulary, especially in its expression of abstract ideas ; but the appeal to the eye instead of the ear has a touch of that universality, indifferent to race or speech or status. Such a script must give persistence to all that can be represented by it, and its pictures must always have exactly the same value and the same meaning. They have been as unchanging in China as the Chinese enamel of self-possession ; the one almost suggests the other.

This gives special significance to the fact that the Chinese have always put the craft of the writing-brush into a class by itself as the supreme art. Painting and literature were alike in character and in medium ; both were 'hand-writing,' and 'written' with the same brush ; both were concerned with pictures—primarily, *mental* pictures. We need to think of both as the writing down of ideas, as the

practice of self-expression—and that not as a pastime, but as a preoccupation. We should study the picture as we would study a specimen of handwriting in order to guess at the character of the writer ; and we should read the literature with an eye to line, proportion, perspective.

For the painter is never copying a natural object or scene, but formulating an idea. This may have been suggested by some object or scene, and a purely abstract idea can materialise only in object or scene ; but the result is not a nature study, scarcely even a memorial of any landscape, certainly never a photograph. The painter's attitude to his subject is primarily and predominantly intellectual, not emotional and never mechanical. It was precisely this intellectual pressure that made him prefer monochrome as his medium, for polychrome must be emotional.

The first step in an intellectual approach tends to be analytical, especially in the case of a purely abstract idea ; on the analysis a Chinese painter based a mental picture, and then he 'wrote down' his ideas about that picture. He could not associate any idea with the mechanical, because he considered the mechanical inhuman ; but he could not depict the abstract except by relating it to observed phenomena with which the idea reasonably 'corresponded.'

Here the long years of wide wandering across Central Asia became important ; for the wanderers settled as families on tiny plots of loess, and there gradually evolved a loess theory of land usage. The high percentage of glacier-silt in this soil makes it incredibly fertile ; and, being wind-borne, it is distributed over any and every kind of ground, high or low, rough or smooth. But the continental climate has great extremes of temperature with small and precarious rainfall ; and the soil is so porous, and so much of the land is rough and hilly, that irrigation by natural means is almost

impossible. Still, given constant toil, the loess is so productive that a whole family—all working all the time—can live on a couple of acres ; and they are really self-contained, needing practically nothing from outside and feeling no debt or duty to those outside. The only obligations are—or have been till quite recently—to the family, but these are overwhelming ; life on the family plot has been ‘ imprisonment for life with hard labour ’—on wheel and bucket irrigation.

A great painter, however, probably belonged to a ‘ many-acred ’ family, whose domain could allow of a tiny toy garden ; through this he kept in touch with ‘ the world,’ and from it he drew inspiration for his mental pictures—from its mountains and rivers, its lakes and forests. But standards were hopelessly false, with no attempt to observe scale—the dwarf trees being often higher than the mountains ! What ‘ response ’ was Man likely to make to such an environment ? Or what kind of reaction from it ? Had it any merits ?

Yes, it had some. Whatever its limitations, physical or political or social, the experience of centuries had brought the people into perfect adjustment to it even by the time of Confucius, so that a real equilibrium existed between the man and the place ; and, except where there is such equilibrium, people are very unlikely to have a properly balanced character. The loess plot and its family were in perfect equilibrium, and a well-balanced nature is a prime characteristic of the Chinese.

But the lever of the balance was an incredible industry, which could not be maintained by anyone without some reaction and even violent reaction. The Creator Himself, we are told, ‘ rested on the seventh day ’ only because ‘ He had ended the work that He had made.’ What were those

to do whose work was never ended, or for whom a rest on one day in every seven days was an economic absurdity?

The obvious *optimum* was to accept and maintain the total weight of work, but to make occasional and temporary breaks in its continuity. This kept the work, as all work should be—and as very little work is in this machine-cursed world—a psychological as well as a physical activity, something done in long spells and with zest and to a worthy end; and the pauses were made comparable. The best relief from work is play, from bodily activity is mental activity, from humdrum realities is whole-hearted pretence. Some of us can remember days when happy children ‘played at shop’ or ‘played at soldiers.’

Now in essence and origin Buddhism was a reaction against formalism and ceremonial, but it soon learnt to tolerate and even to welcome festivals. At first all these were in honour of the Buddha—on the eighth day of the second month, when he left his home—on the eighth day of the fourth month, which was his birthday—on the eighth day of the twelfth month, the day of his translation into Nirvana, etc. But experience must have proved very soon how fully such celebrations met a human need, and the habit spread until there were dozens of ‘days’ of petty festival, little spells of childish frivolity, lit up with flags and fireworks. This was the best possible reaction from manual work, but less helpful as relief to mental work; and here, where the artistic recreation comes in, the social aspect of the loess ‘slavery’ became important.

So far as the loess plot was concerned, the ‘slaves’ were marvellously self-contained, and equally self-centred. Mother Earth supplied almost every necessary of life, and they lived in unceasing and intimate contact with her; but

they could not really get away from contact with other lives and minds. To-day the population of China is nearly 400,000,000, and it is increasing by fully 4,000,000 every year. The insignificance of the individual must have been for centuries as profound as the 'world' standards of his toy garden were false. Even if art amongst the humblest was popularised rather than practised, the actual artists were never immune from the *aura* of the loess life. Man was so obviously a nonentity, so far from being the centre of the universe, that he could not appropriately be made the centre of any picture; indeed, portraiture, as making *one* person the centre of a picture, was almost an impropriety. He might be caricatured, as he was rightly housed in flimsy fretwork of bamboo; but no true artist ever thought of 'perpetuating' him, still less of idealising him, as birds and beasts might be idealised.

Here is the reason why we must always relate the 'truth' of Chinese art to the correspondence between the artist's ideas and the phenomena observed by him, and must never be obsessed with our own standards and observations. Then the truth of Chinese painting becomes amazing; and, though specially true for the painter and his Chinese followers, it is directly true for us Westerns, as giving always some clear glimpse of the universal. If we are often disappointed, the probable cause is our forgetting the intellectual basis and the geographical background of the work. An attempt to analyse one or two abstract ideas—for instance, 'loneliness' (so hard to find among 400,000,000 people) or 'rest' (so rare for the slave of the family plot)—may illustrate both.

For even on the loess plot 'loneliness' must mean getting away from the stifling human congestion, and the tiny mountains and forests of the toy garden supply 'motives' for pictures of lonely environments. It is important, too, that the Chinese associate the forests with mountains. dis-

sociating any forest ideas from their essential idea of a plain. To them a plain, rightly, suggests wide space ; if it is jungle-clad, it ceases to act—to ‘control’—as a plain. Certainly, the canopy of the Selvas forbids vision upward or outward, and broods over one with very thinly veiled enmity ; it suggests a prison rather than a prospect.

Again, to the Chinese painter ‘loneliness’ has not been associated with unknown and uninhabitable regions, for he has felt in it a human note quite alien to his idea of such regions. In a sheer waste, over miles of desolation, he would ‘miss’ no one, because he would not be looking for anyone ; he could not think of being ‘lonely’ unless there was some suggestion that he might have, or might once have had, company there.

The ideal picture of ‘loneliness’ shows a vast stretch of sandy steppe, just such as the early pathfinders learnt to fear and flee from. It is utterly devoid of landmarks, even in the blue distance ; it is devoid even of varying levels. It is equally devoid of skymarks—in the cloudless sky, but you are aware of a suggestion of time—the stagnant heat of early afternoon or the sinister glare of early evening. And the human note is in the foreground—the bleached bones of one who once travelled there.

We may approach an ideal picture of ‘rest’ in a similar way. Even for us a true sensation of ‘rest’ can come only from a potentially mobile source, for stagnation or paralysis is not rest. There is nothing restful about an erratic boulder of granite ; an environment of such boulders would merely suggest again constriction and imprisonment. Rest is a pause, a sequel, an end achieved, a preparation. It can be suggested—just suggested—by a perfectly ripe head of wheat waiting for the reaper on a windless day. Better still is an actually moving object, especially a flat surface, which seems not to be moving ; and the favourite in China has always

been moving water—a rippleless river under the stagnant heat of afternoon or the *chiaroscuro* of evening.

The artist wanted to give a sensation of rest, and a true picture had to make quite clear that the flat surface was not really motionless—not a dead floor of glass, but a moving river ; and so, though not one wavelet would have been visible on the water, the picture must show ‘waves’ in wavy cross-lines. The restfulness had to be put into the ‘handwriting’ so that it suggested a paradise of leisure, a whole eternity of time for the hand to spend in travelling across the page—the sort of poise that can be seen in the elegant, elaborate, leisurely pen-craft of an old gentlewoman of the eighteenth century. The result is not a true picture of the river as seen by the eye, but it is absolutely true as formulating the idea in the artist’s mind.

One intriguing little problem is raised by the wavy cross-lines. For in these landscapes, as supreme examples of Chinese art, there seems to be—and naturally—no attempt to suggest waves of sound, an appeal to the ear. But the more one studies the inimitable pictures of moving water, the more convinced one becomes that the wavy lines are meant to suggest sounds too ; for the ear is not deceived by the apparent absence of movement in the unrippled surface.

The Chinese seem to be more sensitive to movement where we are more sensitive to sound, and vice versa. Certainly, one gets a strong suggestion of loneliness when one hears over the crest of a moor in a winter gloaming the whistle of a hermit curlew—whistling to himself ; and one gets an equally strong suggestion of rest when one watches a wisp of cirrus drifting almost imperceptibly across a noonday sky in summer, especially if one looks up to it across the crinkled sky-line of the moor where

‘The widening hill-tops touch infinitude.’

But one is suddenly reminded of the murmur hidden in the wavy lines when the peace of the drifting cirrus is intensified by the chirp of a grasshopper from beyond the scented screen of wild mint and meadowsweet against which one is resting.

THE OLD PATHS.

*Fog and forest, ford and bog,
All were left below,
By the British Downland-folk
Going to and fro.
Safe the causeways of the hills,
High the beaten track.
Plodding on the chalky paths
Safe for coming back.*

*Medway to the Mendips,
Stonehenge to the sea.
Vectis Isle to Wash, and so
Track along o' we.*

*Trade and war and pilgrimage,
Thanes and priests and lords
Sought to foot the lower ways,
Short cuts to the fords.
Watling Street and Pedder's Way,
Raknield and Ermine,
Fustian, leather, bronze, and steel,
Monkish dress and vermin.*

*British tracks and Roman roads,
Sun and sleet and rain,
Back we go to Downland ways,
Tramping them again.*

F. KEELING SCOTT.

‘*WORTHY NAIRNE.*’

BY JAMES FERGUSSON.

ABOUT six miles north-east of Perth rises the high and conspicuous hill of Dunsinnan. A prehistoric fortress on its oval top, surrounded by a rampart of large stones bedded in clay, was in the eighteenth century supposed to be the remains of the strong castle built by Macbeth on the advice of the weird sisters. A few miles to the west of it was the moor they were believed to have frequented, where the country people pointed out ‘the witches’ stone.’ Close to it stood an ‘elegant mansion-house,’ the seat of Sir William Nairne, second baronet of Dunsinnan.

Sir William, who was the head of a family settled in Perthshire since the days of Robert III, had been twice married, in both cases to widows. By his first wife he had a son named Thomas, born in 1708, and two daughters; the only child of his second venture—Emilia Graham, daughter of David Graham of Fintry and widow of a Hunter of Burnside¹—was a son whom he named after himself. Sir William died at Scone on June 26, 1754, at an advanced age leaving Dunsinnan to his son Thomas, now a married man with a family. His other son, William, was studying for the law in Edinburgh, where, on March 11, 1755, he was admitted a member of the Faculty of Advocates.

He seems to have been a quiet but pleasant enough young man, welcome in Edinburgh society, given to mild academic jests, and regarding life with a realistic and unimaginative eye. His friends appear to have belonged mostly to the

¹ National Library of Scotland, MS. 37, 2, 4.

legal circle which he now entered. Among them were the energetic, versatile, and humorous George Dempster of Dunnichen, a young Angus laird who had been admitted advocate a week before himself, and his close companion Adam Fergusson, son of one of the judges, Lord Kilkerran, who entered the Faculty the following December. The correspondence of these three sheds a little light on Nairne's character and tastes at the age of about twenty-five.

Dempster had started with Fergusson in the spring of 1756 to perform the grand tour ; but family affairs called him home after six months. He returned to Edinburgh to dazzle his friends with his new French clothes, bearing their chaff good-humouredly and retaliating at the expense of their more sober dress.

'I must own a little surprise,' he wrote to Fergusson, 'to return to a country without nobility, and where the law predominates and triumphs over the sword . . . to find a man pass for a gentleman without a laced coat or a diamond ring, and to hear from Nairne that he had been visiting Lady Boyde in a valet de chamber's frock and an unpowdered brown greezy head. . . . Nairne watches my motions with all the vigilance of a Mentor to take care that none of 'em betray affection, conceit, or a contempt of the homely objects that surround me.'

Nairne saw much of Dempster during the next year or two. Often, with another friend, Robert Arbuthnot, they sat up half the night, discussing the world's affairs and putting them straight with the usual confidence of youth. Home rule for Scotland was as topical a subject then as to-day ; but in 1757 the model for Scotland to follow was not Ireland, nor Denmark, nor even Russia—but Switzerland.

'In discourses of this kind,' wrote Dempster, 'the sun often surprises us. Often have we dissolved the unequal union of our country to England, converted it into a republic,

marshal'd Scotia's warlike sons, cultivated her barren fields, fortified her avenues and strong places, and reestablished her long lost independence.'

Neither Dempster's reminiscences nor Fergusson's letters roused in Nairne at this time any wish to travel himself. Scotland was evidently good enough for him.

'I hope,' he wrote to Fergusson, 'you will find in Italy all the satisfaction and entertainment which you expected to have there. . . . I can't say I envy your enjoyments, but I wish I was with you to share them, tho' I so far take part in your concerns, that what makes you happy gives me pleasure, even at so great a distance. I'm afraid you will regret leaving so fair a country as by all accounts Italy is, to return to the rugged hills and frozen climate of your native Caledonia, [but] let me assure you that our snows are not constant, nor our atmosphere continually filled with showery clouds. At this moment our sun shines as bright as where you are and gently warms us while it broils you. We had what is called a hard winter, that is a very frosty one, which I think the wholesomest and best, and a very favourable seed-time gives us now the hopes of a plentiful harvest.'

Nairne had a countryman's eye for weather and crops.

He sent his absent friend some literary news from Scotland. John Home's new tragedy *Douglas*, produced with tremendous *éclat* at Edinburgh five months before, had at last achieved the stage of Covent Garden. 'The reverend author,' wrote Nairne, 'is to demit his charge and from such encouragement will I dare say continue to write. I'm hopeful he will do credit to his country, as he really has a very fine genius.' David Hume had published the second volume of his *History of Great Britain*, and had pleased the critics this time, 'for he has not laid himself open to the censure which the first justly incurred, from the indecent contempt of religion which he there showed.' Hume had written some essays also.

'In all his works,' was Nairne's somewhat judicial comment, 'he shows himself so acute and master of such talents that it is really deplorable so great abilities should be so ill employed and that a mind so capable to discover truth should have so fatal a byass to error.'

How much more commendable were the poetic labours of Mr. Wilkie, the minister of Ratho ! He had just published his epic poem, the *Epigoniad*, in which the most searching eye could not discern the smallest danger of originality.

'I really think it a fine thing,' wrote Nairne ; 'it's extremely like Homer. . . . The plan is not perhaps unexceptionable, but his poetic fire is equal to Homer's (who in that has hitherto remained unrivalled), his similies are no less frequent, and in my opinion not inferiour.'¹

Nairne's friendship with George Dempster continued to the end of his life ; but with Fergusson, although their characters and opinions had much in common, he seems to have lost touch. In November, 1762, he and Dempster made the acquaintance of young James Boswell, at Paxton's inn in the Grassmarket. Boswell's journal records his first impressions of them both. Dempster he found 'a most agreeable well-bred man, sensible and clever, gentle and amiable.' Nairne he set down as 'an honest upright fellow ; somewhat stiff in his manner, but not without parts in a moderate degree.'

Nairne and Boswell met again in the Netherlands the following year, when Boswell was in his turn performing the grand tour. Boswell found his acquaintance 'just the old man, quiet, sensible, worthy.'—'Worthy Nairne' is again the phrase Boswell applies to him in 1767. His journal records many friendly meetings in their own and other people's houses during the 'sixties and 'seventies.

¹ Kilkerran MSS.

Nairne devoted himself to the law with more assiduity than any of these three friends of his. Sir Adam Fergusson (as he had become on his father's death in 1759) practised at the bar for some years with success ; but Dempster gave up the law to go into Parliament in 1760, and Sir Adam followed him to Westminster in 1774, while Boswell, having hovered for some time between the bar and the army, made, after 1763, the pursuit and cultivation of Samuel Johnson the chief end of his life. In 1773 he persuaded that formidable critic of the Scots to test his opinions of that people by first-hand observation, and Nairne was one of the earliest of his Edinburgh acquaintances to be introduced to Johnson on the latter's arrival in Edinburgh. This was on the second evening of Johnson's first stay, when Nairne was invited to supper at Boswell's house in James's Court on the north side of the Lawnmarket. When the two set out for the north Nairne accompanied them as far as St. Andrews.

Johnson liked Nairne, with his quiet manners and his fondness for the classics, and their conversation was amicable. When they were about to embark to cross the Firth of Forth, Boswell pointed out to Johnson that 'the port here was the mouth of the river or water of Leith,' and Nairne added with a smile, 'Not *Lethe*.'—'Why, sir,' said Johnson, 'when a Scotchman sets out from this port for England, he forgets his native country.'—'I hope, sir,' retorted Nairne, 'you will forget England here.'—'Then 'twill be still more *Lethe*,' replied Johnson vigorously, and went on to deprecate the unnecessary size of the pier—'you have no occasion for so large a one : your trade does not require it.'

They landed on Inchkeith, where Johnson let his fancy play, as he did more than once on the islands he visited, with the notion of building a house there. Then, resuming their passage, they proceeded to Kinghorn, where they dined,

and took a post-chaise for St. Andrews. They travelled by Kirkcaldy and Cupar, Johnson and Boswell in the chaise, and Nairne and Boswell's servant Joseph riding beside it. They had 'a dreary drive, in a dusky night' to St. Andrews, but Johnson 'revived agreeably' at Glass's inn. Nairne introduced his companions to Dr. Watson, a professor at the University, with whom they lodged; they found their host 'a well-informed man, of very amiable manners.'

Nairne accompanied his two friends during a part of their exploration of the little city, where they were entertained, as Johnson put it, 'with all the elegance of lettered hospitality.' Yet a certain gloom oppressed them at the spectacle of 'an university declining'—it had at this time less than a hundred students—'a college alienated, and a church profaned and hastening to the ground'; and Johnson assailed the memory of Knox with whole-hearted abuse. Nairne himself shared the Englishman's feeling of depression. As they paced the cloisters, Johnson's booming voice echoing portentously from the old walls while he 'talked loudly of a proper retirement from the world,' Nairne remarked that he himself 'had an inclination to retire.' Johnson gave a qualified approval to this wish, holding that a man might withdraw himself from the world without blame when he had 'done his duty to society,' and backing his opinion with a line of Hesiod.

Nairne was in Edinburgh (for the time of the Session was approaching) when Johnson and Boswell returned there from Auchinleck after the conclusion of their Highland tour. He accompanied them on a visit to the Castle, which Johnson admitted to be 'a great place,' and a few days later entertained them to supper at his own house, near the Parliament Close. He undoubtedly left a pleasant impression on the mind of Johnson, who recorded their travelling to-

gether on the first page of his *Journey to the Western Islands*, with a courteous reference to Nairne as a 'gentleman who could stay with us only long enough to shew us how much we lost at separation.' When the book was published, Nairne was among the first of Johnson's Edinburgh acquaintances whose good opinion of it Boswell was anxious to ascertain. 'Went home with young Donaldson,' says his journal on February 12, 1775, 'and got the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews* on Mr. Johnson's *Journey*, which were a feast. . . . Found Mr. Nairne when I came home, and read the reviews on Mr. Johnson to him.'

On April 12 of the following year Boswell invited Nairne to dine with him at the Crown and Anchor tavern in London, to meet Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Bennet Langton, and an old friend, Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo. As might have been expected with such a company, it was an evening of lively conversation, and Johnson talked memorably of drinking, of his *Rambler*, of reading in general, of Fielding's *Amelia*, Cumberland's *Odes*, and the *Reviews*; but if Nairne attempted to compete in conversation with the wit and wisdom around him, he said nothing that struck Boswell as worth recording, even as a foil to Johnson.

He does not appear, as a matter of fact, to have shone much in conversation, though Boswell found enough amusement in one or two of his remarks at various times to note them in his commonplace-book. He was not unsociable. He would hardly have been a friend of Boswell's if he had been, nor would he have been—as he was—a member of that lively body of Edinburgh wits and *literati*, the Poker Club. Yet he was a quiet man, and his temperament was a solitary one—a quality perhaps due in some measure to the background of his childhood and early youth, with no male relations but a half-brother old enough

to have been his father, and a father who might have been his grandfather.

The wish to retire from the world of which Nairne spoke to Johnson in 1773 was probably no affectation ; for he had had many private troubles to bear. Sir Thomas, his half-brother, had died in 1760, and the owner of Dunsinnan was now his son Sir William Nairne, the fourth baronet, whose brother Charles had also died, in India, where he was in the East India Company's service, in 1771.¹ Nairne's mother had died in 1767, at Bridgeton. He himself, although the heir-presumptive to the family estate, never married. Yet loneliness was easier to bear than the fearful scandal caused in 1765 by the trial of his niece Katharine for the murder of her husband.

Katharine Nairne, a spirited and reckless young woman, with ' a high nose, black eyebrows, and a pale complexion,' was married in January, 1765, at the age of nineteen, to a middle-aged laird of a sickly constitution, Thomas Ogilvie of Eastmiln, who lived with his mother in a small and unattractive house in Angus. It was perhaps hardly surprising that Katharine heartily disliked the match, for which she herself had probably not been very willing. But to poison her husband with arsenic four months after marrying him was a somewhat excessive expression of her distaste for him ; and to her contemporaries it was still more shocking that she should have done this with the help of her husband's brother Patrick, a lieutenant in the 89th Regiment, with whom she was alleged to have fallen in love within a week of her wedding. They were both arrested, tried, convicted, and condemned to death. Katharine was defended by the warm-hearted, eloquent, and emotional Alexander Lockhart (afterwards raised to the bench as Lord Covington). He

¹ National Library of Scotland, MS. 37, 2, 4.

made tremendous efforts on her behalf. The trial lasted for forty-eight hours ; Lockhart ‘displayed such powers of eloquence and ingenuity as astonished everybody,’ and remained unaffected by the strain, though his opponent, the Lord Advocate, was completely worn out. ‘To save the life of his unhappy client,’ says a contemporary, ‘he gave up, with great art, her character, but contended that there was no legal proof of her *guilt*, though enough to damn her fame.’ His skill and his oratory were unavailing, and Katharine was condemned to suffer with her paramour.

Patrick Ogilvie was duly hanged in the Grassmarket, after devoting most of the time between his condemnation and death to playing on his violin ; but Katharine pleaded her pregnancy, and her execution was delayed. The case had aroused enormous interest. Katharine, like Madeleine Smith nearly a hundred years later, did not lack defenders, and the arguments for and against her guilt were freely discussed in Edinburgh society. The grief and shame of her uncle did not prevent his resolving at all costs to save his niece from the gallows. A lawyer himself, he could not be ignorant of the impropriety of his interfering with the course of justice, and a study of the evidence given at the trial can have left little doubt in his mind that her condemnation had been just. None the less, there is every reason to believe that Katharine’s escape from the Tolbooth was made with his connivance and probably by his invention. She slipped out of the prison one evening disguised as the midwife, Mrs. Shiells, who had been attending her, and who for several days had passed the gaoler with her head muffled up on the plea of toothache. On the evening of March 15, 1766, Katharine muffled her own head in the same manner, walked boldly out of the prison, and made her way to the foot of the Horse Wynd, where a carriage

was waiting. In it was James Bremner, her uncle's clerk. A male disguise was provided for her, and under Mr. Bremner's escort Katharine was hurried south to Dover, whence she escaped to France. All had gone according to plan, though Mr. Bremner had had a most uncomfortable time during the journey owing to the frivolous behaviour of his charge, who was so excited at her escape from the Tolbooth that, as he complained afterwards, 'she was continually putting her head out of the window and laughing immoderately.' Judging from her behaviour in Scotland, the legend that she subsequently married a Dutch gentleman, had a large family, and lived happily ever afterwards, seems on the whole more credible than the report that she spent many years in a French convent, and died in England some years after the French Revolution.

No scandal attached itself to William Nairne, and he continued to follow the law with very fair success. 'If he did not acquire the fame of a great orator or a profound lawyer, he was at least respectable in both capacities.' He amassed a moderate fortune, and was at length able to buy the family estate from his nephew Sir William Nairne, who, lacking the interest, the capacity, or perhaps the money to modernise and improve it as had become necessary, was probably not unwilling to pass it on to an uncle with a keen interest in agriculture. The price Nairne paid was £16,000, and when he entered into possession of Dunsinnan he had practically no ready money left. He set himself to live as economically as possible until he should find his funds sufficiently increased to carry out the agricultural reforms on which he had set his heart.

On February 27, 1786, he was raised to the bench, and took his seat in the Court of Session on March 9. The Duchess of Gordon complimented him on his promotion

with a pun which it must have taken all her celebrated vivacity and charm to pass off as wit. Meeting him soon after his appointment, she asked him by what name he was now to be known. 'Dunsinnan,' replied Nairne. 'I am astonished at that, my Lord,' said the Duchess, 'for I never knew that you had *begun* sinning.'

About this time he sat to Henry Raeburn for a portrait which afterwards passed into the possession of the Faculty of Advocates. It hangs to-day in the Parliament House at Edinburgh, in a conspicuous position next to the door by which you enter that historic hall from Parliament Close. Although the paint is cracked and yellowed and much in need of cleaning and restoration, the picture has a charm which draws the eye. Lord Dunsinnan leans back in his chair with an air of satisfaction. He looks contented and at ease. From under fine black eyebrows his gaze twinkles at the strolling advocates, the hurrying messengers, and the visitors casually loitering round the portraits and statues which line the walls, with an expression half kindly and half cynical. He looks like a man who has reached the top of his tree but found nothing there to excite him : a man who has seen much of life but never found cause in it either for complacence or despair, a man whose emotions have never run to extremes. His face is quietly humorous, genially deprecating. The one thing you cannot call it is dull.

Very different is the face etched by John Kay. Raeburn portrayed the judge in a pose of relaxation, still in his robes but at the end of his day's work on the bench. Kay drew him still on the bench, the geniality hidden under a blank mask, the white-gloved hands decorously folded, heavy-lidded eyes turned slightly upward with an expression almost sanctimonious. It is a striking contrast.

In 1790 Lord Dunsinnan's nephew died at the early age of 45. He had been married, since 1769, to Alexandrina Scot, fifth daughter of Robert Scot of Dunninald, who survived him till 1820 ; but they had had no children. The judge succeeded him as fifth baronet of Dunsinnan. His finances were still feeling the strain of purchasing the estate, and by his promotion his professional income had become limited to a fixed salary. He continued to live with the strictest economy. At Dunsinnan, where he spent the legal vacations, he kept only a small household, and invited no guests. Not unnaturally he was accused of parsimony. Perhaps there was some foundation for the charge. A story was told of a visit paid to him by George Dempster, retired from Parliament but as busy and sociable as ever. It was only intended for a few hours, but late in the afternoon a violent storm broke, and Dempster dropped a hint to his host that he might have to remain for the night. Dunsinnan became extremely agitated. The fact was that he had only one bed in the house—his own—apart from the servants'. He did his best to deflect Dempster, as politely as possible, from his purpose of remaining ; he hoped against hope that the storm would abate enough for his guest to reach Perth at least ; and at length he even went out himself to the stable to order Dempster's carriage to the door. But here he found himself defeated by Dempster's coachman, who flatly refused to harness his horses in such weather to traverse the notoriously bad roads of the district, and declared that he would rather lie on straw in the stable till morning if he could get no better lodging. Lord Dunsinnan returned in despair to his guest and explained the difficulties of the situation.

'George,' he said, 'if you stay, you will go to bed at ten and rise at three ; and then I shall get the bed after you.'

In spite of these domestic privations, Lord Dunsinnan was able to proceed with the improvement of his estate. In his zeal for agricultural reform he resembled many of his brethren of the bench, such as Monboddo and Gardenstone, Kilkerran and Kames before them, and Kilkerran's son Hermand in later years. The real revolution of Scottish agriculture had reached its zenith earlier in the century ; at Dunsinnan methods were old-fashioned, and the laird laboured earnestly to bring them up to date. The run-rig system still prevailed at his accession, with all its inconvenience and waste, and the ' outfield ' of the farms, which the tenants held gratis and so had no inducement to cultivate, produced no crop but heather and rough grass. Dunsinnan set to work to make radical reforms. He divided his land into regular farms, allotting a certain proportion of outfield to each, and induced the farmers to enclose the barren land and cultivate it. He also encouraged them to grow turnips, potatoes, and flax, besides the traditional oats and barley, and to follow a proper rotation of crops. By 1798 he had managed to build a number of good modern farm-houses. The increase of the population in the parish of Collace (in which Lord Dunsinnan was the sole landed proprietor) was ascribed in the *Statistical Account of Scotland* to ' the encouragement given by the proprietor to farmers and tradesmen of every denomination.'

He had passed his seventieth birthday soon after the beginning of the century, and on August 8, 1808, he resigned his appointment as a Lord of Justiciary which he had held since December, 1792. Robert Dundas (Lord Melville's son), acknowledging his letter of resignation, wrote :

' Directions have accordingly been given for preparing forthwith a warrant for the appointment of Lord Hermand

[George Fergusson, brother of Sir Adam] as your successor, and I have also taken measures for expediting the warrant for the pension authorised by the late Act of Parliament.'¹

Dunsinnan still found it necessary to husband his money carefully in order to carry on the development of his estate, and he saw no reason to waste any of it by falling in with the suggestion of Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, that indefatigable framer of 'projects,' that he should erect a monument on the top of Dunsinnan hill in commemoration of Macbeth's castle. His refusal, dated September 6, 1808, was polite but firm :

'Although I am not sure if the fine green top upon the black hill, which affords evident marks of manual labour and habitation, would receive much embellishment from anything that could be built upon it, yet I should willingly give my consent to any gentleman, who thought it would be ornamental to the country, to make such an erection as you should approve of, because I am sure it would be in the best taste ; but, as to myself, the truth is, that I have been laying out so much of my money in the valley, that I really could not at present afford anything to the hill.'

In 1809 Lord Dunsinnan resigned from the Court of Session altogether ; his letter of resignation was written on January 31.² The last few months of his life were spent in the rural quiet of Dunsinnan. George Dempster, who now generally lived at Broughty Ferry or St. Andrews, 'playing golf, whist, and the fool,' as he said, tried to induce his old friend to visit him. In March, 1811, he persuaded himself that Lord Dunsinnan would come to Broughty Ferry during the approaching summer, and wrote some jubilant doggerel to celebrate the success of his endeavours :

¹ National Library of Scotland MS. 59, f. 109.

² *Ibid.*, f. 163.

*Posterity will all agree
That when compared with you and me,
Old Orpheus is but noughty :
He brought a girl
To the door of hell—
We've drawn a hermit from his cell
At Dunsinnan, to Broughty.*

But his satisfaction was premature. A fortnight later, on March 23, 1811, Lord Dunsinnan died. He bequeathed his estate to his great-grand-nephew, James Mellis, descended through the female line from Sir Thomas Nairne : the baronetcy became extinct.

Lord Dunsinnan left behind him a happy and prosperous community of thriving farmers and busy craftsmen ; the land was well cultivated, the new plantations were flourishing, the people were well housed, and every old or infirm person on the estate had a cottage and garden rent free. He had followed Dr. Johnson's advice. He had done his duty to society before retiring from the world.

THE GREAT ADVENTURE.

BY COUNTESS EVA KORNIS.

I OFTEN wonder if the old house still stands, as it stood then, as ever it will stand in my memory : on slightly raised ground, massive and domineering. It was like a symbol of those pre-war days of peace, stable and self-complacent, that dominated our childhood ; days which invoked the moment to pass along—oh but so gently, and then stood aside to let the years fly past unnumbered. The anachronism that lasted not long enough and seemed eternity ; the extravagant period verging on the absurd and resembling a fairy-tale.

Such now seems the old castle of Egervár which, too, verged on the fairy-tale. It was like some prehistoric beast that withdraws into its gigantic shell. The long row of windows blinked from under the steep-gabled, wooden-tiled French roof. Squat towers protected it on the four corners ; they were massive, black-peaked, interfering, and glowed a warm pink as they caught the slanting rays of the sun. Only the north was gloomy and dark, where cataracts of creepers hung over the entrance door, half hiding its gaping mouth.

This house, with its many half-shut eyes, seemed only to wake in the mornings, when the shutters were thrown open, and the maids shook out the dusters, and the tiny, square windows of the towers cast inquisitive glances in all directions.

Perhaps because this house could remember so much, the present made it sleepy now. It drew back into memories of the past, drowsy, self-sufficient, vain ; yet a kind enough

mother to those who, for the first time, opened their eyes to see sunlight vaguely shifting on the curved edges of the vaulted ceilings. And to them it could be more than a mother of flesh and blood. To them, whose conscience first woke to those changing lights, it made a bequest that could never be obliterated. They themselves would not know whence came the stiffness of their mind and the faint-heartedness of their actions, as they languidly walked through life ; only, sometimes, from the memory of far-away, hazy childhood, a gabled, narrow window would send an ironical wink.

More benevolent was the garden. Here the afternoon sprinkled emerald-green patches between shadowy firs and oaks. Here, in the distance, beyond far stretches of grass, black alders trailed heavy branches right down to the ground, hiding a sluggish stream whose muddy depth had never been stirred. Undaunted, it reflected knotty roots and lean trunks that gazed fixedly down on to the surface, always, till night came and the deep blue turned into deeper black, and instead of their own picture the alders then stood guard over unknown mysteries. Sometimes a narrow slip of slimy mud showed for a day or two under the roots, then the water rose again and reached a fallen trunk that bridged the span between the two banks. Here was the highroad for snails to walk over to the island on rainy days.

Oh, the island of our desires where all is allowed, and nothing is impossible ! Where the blackberry may climb over rotting tree-trunks, and tumble in profusion down the other side, stretching its tender fingers towards the water, and show the berries their blue reflection. Where the wild hops may spiral up, high, only to fall back in fluttering garlands, or hang, festoon-like, from branch to branch. Where the kingfisher, startled by Indian war cries, flashes

in a blue zigzag above the still surface. This is the island where dreams have most colour, summer the greatest depth ; where only the dragonflies know of the children, where play is masked as reality, and cockchafers are made to stand up against an army of Redskins.

It was as though no grown-up person had ever set foot in the grounds of Egervár on a summer afternoon. At such times Mademoiselle Bray, the children's old Mazelle, would put her aching feet up on a low stool, and with a deep sigh plunge into the sweet excitement of yellow-bound novels, which on the mere opening exhaled perfumes of her distant home. Old-time friends kept her company with their spirited conversation along these pages ; talked to her, whose dull life was interwoven with the coloured threads of her fancy. Over hills and fields they took her, over Hungarian woodland, Austrian mountains, snow-covered peaks of Switzerland ; over impediment of time and space, means and old age, carried her to that incomparable '*beau pays de France*,' far away, even as her youth was now far distant.

Sometimes with her shaky, but still soft, voice she would sing : '*Joli tambour, qui partez pour la guerre*.' At such times the dull eyes brightened with the memory of blue skies of Provence, and the children felt the spell of a far-away Latin race.

'Sing again ! Do sing again, Mazelle !'

And a pert imp danced in her voice as she began again, '*Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre, mironton, mironton, mirontaine*.'

This was Péter's favourite : Marlborough, who goes away to war, for whom the beautiful—of course she was, wasn't she, Mazelle ? the beautiful Madame again and again mounts the tower stairs [*'mironton, mironton, mirontaine'*] until she can see, galloping towards the castle, her page, '*de noir tout habillé*.' But when the old French chanson got to this point,

Péter could no longer withhold a fat tear that came brimming over the long lashes.

‘No, don’t go on any longer,’ he pleaded, and the old lady was only allowed to continue with the comforting : ‘*mironton, mironton, mirontaine.*’

All this, however, was a world for itself. Mazelle in her round tower-room, crammed with so much exciting rubbish that the children loved, all this had nothing to do with the garden, and still less with the island. Mademoiselle, with her many photographs and neatly ranged cardboard boxes, was a romance of old times, whereas the sun-spotted island formed the background of all that is to come, where no barrier stands in the way of the heart’s desire, and where from the foliage above, Jules Verne may glory in his immortality ; be present while unknown islands are discovered, or the centre of the earth explored ; see the arrival of Phileas Fog at his London club, after a valiant tour round the world in eighty days. Wonders piled upon wonders !

But the crowning game of all, the discovery of this very island, more wonderful than any Pole or moonflight, whereon you can pile volcano, iceberg, Popocatepetl—surely the most delightful of all words—magnetic poles, waterfalls, cataracts, words of your fancy, inventions of your imagination, which has room for all you loved and desired—this game had to be begun elsewhere. The island is the fulfilment, but, as in reality, the place of action is a distant city of the East, so in their play the game begins in the long avenue leading up to the house. This quiet drive, edged with great fir-trees, is the most important street in Singapore, Hong-Kong, Shanghai, Yokohama, mostly of Hong-Kong, because of the sound. Traffic here is so great, that the only two actors—there being only two parts worth having in such a game—Miklós and Péter, involuntarily knock against

each other. So begins the play, according to strictly formulated pattern :

‘ Sir ! ’

‘ Sir, you have run against me ! ’

‘ You are mistaken, it was you who knocked against me ! ’

‘ Take care, sir ! ’

‘ I shall not stand your impertinence ! ’

‘ Do not insult me ! ’

But words are scarce, besides being inferior things, and as there is nothing now to keep back from blows, the dramatic turn is here quickly inserted.

‘ My name is Mr. Brown.’

‘ Mr. Brown? Surely not the captain of the “Invincible”? Pray, allow me to introduce myself: I am Mr. Jones.’

‘ Mr. Jones? The famous explorer? What unexpected pleasure, sir. My ship lies at anchor here. I am just off to the North Pole—the South Pole—the centre of the Earth—the Moon, etc.’

So far it was the accepted model. The boys had begun to find this part dull; they had gone through it, like through a ritual performance, too often; but their sister, Kata, leaning against a fir trunk, looked on with wistful, dark eyes. The boys never allowed her to take a part in this game. They said there was no more part in it to be had. How stupid these boys were never to invent anything more exciting, they could only play in this stale way. She would have thought of quite different things. Silly, their ‘yes, sir, no, sir. Mr. Brown, Mr. Jones!’ Why not mix a devil and a king, or a princess into the traffic of Hong-Kong? She could do the part of Beelzebub exceedingly well: ‘Ah, Mr. Brown! Ah, Mr. Jones! Allow me to introduce

myself : I am Mr. Beelzebub.' And the explorers would have a fit on the spot, and she could go off with their ship. But no, it was always the same, followed up in the same stupid way, and her part therein, always the same, the inferior rôle of a chief engineer.

The ship was now the east terrace ; you could look in three directions over the stone parapet, whence you saw the rolling billows of the ocean. You could let down the broad stone stairs when you wanted to put out the boats for whale-hunting. The narrow, spiral stairs, that led down to the conservatory, in reality led to the machine-house. Here, with an apple for comfort, squatted Kata, angry and jealous, waiting for orders from above.

'Full steam ahead !' It comes from Captain Miklós through the slit of the iron door.

No, decidedly, this was not amusing. Had she a real machine, instead of these stupid latania palms, in their fat tubs, she would burst their boilers, and give them a little explosion, these brothers of hers, shouting and having the time of their lives above her head. They, up there, in the sunshine, could do and invent anything they pleased, and discover anything they chose ; though, as a matter of fact, when she came to think of it, they were no good whatever at discovering things. Their North Poles and volcanoes were all out of books. They were stupid boys to be captains and inventors, while she, Kata, must sit below, obey orders, poke the fire. Why, she could do that in the old green stove in their schoolroom. Never, never might she see where the ship was going, or be there when a whale was killed.

Péter, worried by her lamentations, sometimes tried to comfort her.

'Cheer up, Kat, the chief engineer is most important.

Really, quite as important as the captain. You know, without him the ship could not go, and we'd never discover anything new.'

[Oh ! discovery ! The most glamorous word in their vocabulary ! The attractive gift the new century gave to its children.]

'What will you be when you grow up ?' This was the ever-recurring question to be discussed on the island, when the wonders of their imagination were exhausted.

'I shall be an explorer.' Miklós astride a fallen tree, in the heart of the island, made his declaration with the air of the eldest, unused to contradiction. 'And I shall discover the North Pole.'

'You can't !' Kata was proud of her knowledge. 'The North Pole has been discovered by Cook.'

'Well, I'm not so sure ; maybe it was Peary—anyhow, you don't understand these things. Besides, it may be the South Pole I shall discover, or something else. What'll you do, Peter ?'

'Oh, me ?—I am going to fly. Not in this silly way they are trying to now, but—oh, I know quite well—I shall have machine wings fixed on to my arms—like a bird, you know. I've got it all thought out. I shall be the first to really fly. Wherever I like. And I shall fly over the ocean and to the North Pole.'

'No, you don't ! I've bagged the North Pole !'

'Very well—oh, very well, not to the North Pole. The North and South Poles belong to Miklós. What'll you be, Kat ?'

She was standing with her back against the trunk upon which rode her lanky, North-Pole-exploring brother. Sucking a grass in her mouth, she puckered her brows, as she gazed intently at an ant-heap. What funny things ants

were. Should she, or should she not, say it? But at the silence of the two boys the words involuntarily tumbled out.

‘I shall be a sea-captain.’

‘Rot!’ came from Péter with deep conviction.

‘To begin with—’ Miklós threw his long leg over the trunk and slid down to the ground; then, crossing his arms, he stood in front of his little sister—‘to begin with, you can’t be a captain, because only boys can be captains.’

‘Lot I care for that!’ she said. ‘And, anyway, d’you think I can’t cut my hair? D’you think only you can wear long trousers? I shall borrow Péter’s sailor suit; I’m as tall as he is. And, anyhow, it’ll not be here—don’t you make such a disgusting face!—I shall run away to sea and be called Edward.’

‘Stupid name!’

‘You know, Kat, a captain must know lots of arithmetic, more arithmetic than anybody else.’

What Miklós had said made no great impression on her. Boy or girl, it seemed much the same; the difference was her skirt, and the two thick plaits, always flying about her head, surely easy to cut off. But this remark of Péter’s had more meaning; arithmetic is an alien word, makes you think of those nasty little numbers that are never right, enemies of the first order.

‘Who told you that?’ she demanded.

‘Of course he must, you little fool!’ sneered Péter. ‘It is the business of the captain to work out where the ship is exactly. Not the sort of arithmetic you know—though you don’t even know that—but algebra, and all sorts of things.’

‘Trigonometry,’ said Miklós, with an air of superiority. Her brother’s learned words cut bitterly into Kata’s pride.

No, she would not admit this truth. A ship's captain must be brave, not fear storms and mutinies, and when the ship goes down, go down along with her. Kata was prepared for all such heroic sacrifice. But to have anything to do with dull numbers, no ! This thought made her rebellious.

'It's not true ! You're telling me this because you won't ever allow me to be captain in play. Well, then, I will ! I'll show you ! Not only in play, but in reality.'

That which up to now she had merely felt as a vague desire, began to take a more definite form. Well, yes, she would show them. Even if she could not begin by being a captain, she would go off to sea and be a cabin boy, like Sigismund Rüstig, in her favourite book. She, too, would be called Sigismund, though this would be only Zsiga in Hungarian, and even the gardener's boy was called so. Better be Edward ; or, better still, Waldemar. Waldemar was a name no real person ever had, and most suitable to the far seas.

Shadows had begun to lengthen, and the slanting rays of the sun pierced into the thickets. The children were tired. Kata said no more, but a new resolution had begun to grow in her. To spite her brothers, the whole world, she would show them all. And while she noiselessly followed the boys along the mossy path, through the copse, carrying her shoes and stockings in her hand, this new idea grew more and more definite.

For nine years now the sounds and shapes of Egervár had filled her with their weird variety ; nine years she had fed on this food of romance, and still nothing had happened. Something must come at last. She was not going to sleep for a hundred years like a Sleeping Beauty—stupid story, that !—she yearned for the unknown adventure. To be a boy who could do things, who could be things, who could

give orders, who knew not the impediment of fluttering skirts or flying pigtaails that got caught on every hedge ! The most boyish of all boys, the captain of a ship, who had power over men, vessels, waves ! He, who stood with his arms crossed, and a gloriously serious face, while the ship went down, and did not listen to anyone who would dissuade him of his brave deed, but sank down, down, into the cold waves ! But she never got any farther than this heroic pose, never followed her valiant self to the bottom of her cool grave ; but began again, afresh, even more excitingly, with new touches of valour.

Tea was laid for the children on a small, round table, amongst the rose-beds, in front of the conservatory. From the terrace above came sounds of the grown-ups at their own tea.

There they sat, with stiffly starched collars, the men ; tight-laced and small-waisted, the women. Into the dimples and hollows of their faces a wide red sunshade threw patches of colour, but in their eyes there was a look of bright self-complacency that a period of quiet security gave them.

The children were tired and bored. In silence they drank their iced coffee, pecked at the stale cake and urged Lajos, the old footman, to get them something else.

‘ Strawberries, Lajos. Why don’t you get us strawberries ? ’

‘ There are no more, I’ve put all on one dish for them.’ He jerked a fat thumb upwards. ‘ Where’s the Frenchy ? ’

‘ Lajos,’ warned Miklós, ‘ if you don’t get us strawberries at once, I shall go up there and ask Mamma for some.’

Though delivered in whispers, Miklós’s threat seemed compelling to the old servant.

‘ All right, all right. Don’t make a show ! I’ll see if there’s any left.’

But up above, on the terrace, there were no whispers ; gay and loud the words travelled in all directions, above the formal garden, above the moat with its water-lilies, and above the drooping Maréchal Niel roses.

‘Excellent, Countess ! A priceless story. And then, what happened then ?’

‘Then, of course, I had to come straight home from the Stefanskirche, along the Kärnthnerstrasse, to my hotel. At the corner of the Altmarkt, whom do you think I should have the misfortune to run into, but the stupid Prince Poldi. *Um Gotteswillen, Gräfin !* Throwing up both hands, like this. The next day was the Fürstenberg ball, everybody knew. *Tout* Vienna is laughing at my misadventure !’

Vienna, Kärnthnerstrasse, the smell of strawberries, fashionable talk, German exclamations and gay laughter, all fluttered as in a dream over Kata’s head. She was not listening any more, but plunged again into her imaginary world, weaving her own story as she went along with it.

The miracle is done. A black-haired, sulky-looking girl turns into a boy—a brave, clever, beautiful boy. Life of the ship ! Flies up the mast. Ship ahoy ! Pirates ! Follow them !

With full steam, full sails, unparalleled courage, they are after the pirates, capture the crew, kill their captain, take their treasures, liberate the imprisoned princess. The hero of the day is he : Sigismund Edward Waldemar, the beautiful, strong, agile, fair-haired cabin boy.

‘*Catherine, ma petite,*’ came a voice from a less interesting world, ‘what about your crotcheting work ?’

‘I hate crotcheting !’ The girl looked her sulkiest at the old lady. ‘Why don’t Miklós and Péter ever have to do any crotcheting ?’

‘*Voyons, voyons,* that is quite a different matter. They

are boys, are they not? Come along now, *ma petite*, and bring your work with you. If you like I will read to you *Les petites filles modèles*, or some other nice book."

So it was even pleasant, this quiet half-hour in Mazelle's dark, cosy room. The little old lady held the book close under the small, paraffin lamp, her spectacles slid down on her little wrinkled nose, on her upper lip the black down moved gently as the beautifully intoned French words came tumbling out like a thread of coloured beads. But all in vain, for still Kata was not listening to the laudable story of the '*Petites filles modèles*'; she was still thinking of her own, only now Sigismund Edward Waldemar called out in French: '*Du courage, mes amis, en avant!*'

There was a knock on the door. Miklós poked his pretty, fair head through.

'Kat to come down. Blue drawing-room. Say good-bye.' And, slamming the door, he was gone again.

But this was much worse than crotchet. To go up to every guest and politely to say good-bye to each in turn. To be patted on the cheek by old gentlemen. To stand still behind great, fat ladies, waiting for a chance to get noticed while they were in the middle of telling their amusing stories and never saw you, not until they turned round, and the whirlwind of their skirts and talk nearly carried little Kata off her feet.

'Ah, the little one! What a little gipsy girl! You have a little gipsy daughter, Marie. *Ganz der Vater!*'

And so she was passed from one guest to the other.

'How thick her hair is! How black her eyes! She is the very image of her father!' Kata knew it all by heart. Anything to get out of this!

As she flew from the room, someone behind the door caught hold of one of her fluttering plaits.

‘How long her nose is ! How black her ears are ! *Ganz der Vater !*’

‘Your ears are black !’ But now she was relieved by Péter’s teasing, she laughed her defiant little laugh.

‘Look, Péter !’

And, pulling her dark-blue serge jacket tight round her thin body, Kata raised herself on tiptoe and, with her stubby nose towards the ceiling, began in a high-pitched, affected voice :

‘*Lieber Graf Peter, wie freut es mich Sie kennen zu lernen, so einen begabten, hübschen Jungen !*’

‘Stop that stuff and speak Hungarian !’

‘O so hopeful and beautiful a youth, dear count Péter, how can you allow yourself such vulgar gesture !’

‘Bottle it, Kat, or you’ll get it from me !’

‘Stop, Péter ! I say, don’t twist ! I’ll not say another word. Come with me and I’ll tell you a secret. Only it’s a very big secret ; don’t even tell Miklós !’

‘Why ? Is it such nonsense that you are afraid to tell him about it ?’

‘It’s not nonsense at all, but if you go on being nasty I won’t even tell you !’

‘Well ; go on, then !’

‘No, not till you’ve promised to keep my secret, to help me, and not to breathe a word about it to anyone.’

‘All right !’

‘Honour bright ?’

‘Honour bright !’

‘Well, then—no, I can’t tell you here !’

She took her brother’s hand, and the two children ran up the narrow back stairs, up the western tower. Here was their real home, in this dark, octagonal room, at the end of the stone-paved corridor that led to Mazelle’s similarly

shaped room. It was a sort of schoolroom, where they had their lessons, and where many shelves stood crammed with much valued treasure. There was no light in it now, but they easily found their way to the narrow seat that encircling the big stove that in winter emitted so much warmth and comfort from its fat green body.

‘Listen to me, Péter ; but, really, you’re not to tell anybody. To-night I am going to run away. I shall run away to sea and be a cabin boy. Don’t laugh in that silly way ! I’ve thought it all out. Will you lend me your sailor cap ? And a pair of trousers ?’

‘They’ll look for you.’

‘I shall leave a letter in my bed to Mamma. I shall write : “ Dear Parents, I have left you to become famous, and I shall come back to you when I have made a great discovery ! ” Then, perhaps, they will not look for me.’

‘But you can’t do that, Kat ; you’re much too stupid. Perhaps if Miklós, or I . . .’

‘Now you’re jealous, you’re jealous of my idea. But I won’t let you have it. You just go on playing your stupid Hong-Kong game. That’s all you boys are good for. I am going to be a real captain.’

For the first time in his life, the difference between the real and the unreal seemed convincing to Peter. Surely, something was amiss here ? There was a difference between acting a play, and living a life. But how explain this to Kata, when it was not altogether clear in his own mind ? How explain it, without seeming jealous ; and perhaps he was jealous ? He had to admit, it seemed a good enough idea. And, musing over this, Péter looked into the darkness in front of him.

‘Listen to me, Péter. D’you know how it will be ? First, I shall go to the sea ; that’s the Adriatic, isn’t it, because

that's nearest. Then I shall look for the finest ship. There must also be cannons on it, and steam engines, and sails, and everything. I shall go aboard and be taken as ship's boy. The captain will like me, because, of course, I shall not tell him that I am a girl. Then, directly after my first or second heroic deed, he will give me promotion, and I shall soon be second in command.'

'What if your captain is a great, ugly fellow, with a double chin, and a red face—like Uncle Imri? And laughs like he does? Or if he'll be like Doctor Mezey? You remember, the one who taught Miklós two years ago, whose moustache was always in the soup?'

For a second her brother's grotesque figures confused Kata's finely confirmed heroes. Why did Péter try to spoil her steadfast vision? But her own picture was not so easy to obscure.

'There is no such captain! And, besides, I shall choose whichever ship I like. Of course, I shall take the finest one, and the commander will be the best-looking of all.'

. . . The handsomest commander, the loveliest ship, the most beautiful, most adventurous life! There is little that bars from this. Only the fairy bridge that reaches from Reality into the Never-Land. The rainbow that spans from Earth to Sky. The arch of heaven you pass under, and the girl turns into a boy, and the story that hid behind closed eyelids slips out into the full light of the day, henceforward to become the truth. A golden bridge—or, maybe, a silver bridge, such as the moon lays across the waters; a silver cobweb it hangs up the valley sides, and stretches over meadows. A glittering silver bridge, like the highroad of Egervár, when the moon shines on it.

On that night Sigisñiund Edward Waldemar, the cabin boy, was conscious, for the first time in his life, of the strange

feeling of trousers round his ankles, as he stepped cautiously along the silver bridge of his fancy.

What a funny thing your shadow is like this, when you are a boy. Your legs are two little men, running separately, one after the other, and neither is able to leave his fellow behind. First, one is in front, then the other. They must hurry because the sea is far. Until morning comes there is no sea, only the French poplars, that have turned into huge black giants, and have laid their lean shadows across the road. Perhaps shadows must also sleep and not be woken. One must on no account tread on to these shadows, Kata knew this for certain. When she came to one she must step, or jump over it, but never, whatever happened, tread into one. And there was something else she must on no account ever do—that was to look back. For behind there was something, somebody. No, nobody of any importance, of course ; perhaps only a funny little fellow, a fanciful little fellow ; but if she looked back, if he made her look back, anything might happen, and he might turn into false and frightening things. Horrid things with an F she must not think about : into a phantastic fierce, furious phantom, and the great enemy, Fright ! Then she would have to run, but where ?

No, she must not think about it. Not think about what was behind ; she must look before her, into the friendly, silver world ; look at her companions, the trouser shadows, how they jumped the shadows in the ditch. She was not alone in this great adventure—for henceforward it was to be called so—there were several of them : the borrowed trousers, just a little too long for her, the funny shadows, and he himself : Sigismund Edward Waldemar, the very essence of masculinity, right up to her sailor cap. It was only under the cap that long plaits hid shamefully. She

could not, however she tried, cut them off with the nail-scissors. Of course, she ought to have had the big paper scissors from the schoolroom, but Miklós had taken those with him to the island where the boys were building a ferry.

A ferry ! ' Look at me, silver meadows, mighty poplars, look at me, the real ship's boy of the real ship, on his way to the Great Adventure ; look at me and know that my big brothers are about to build a raft for a brackish stream. What say you to that, poplars ? Building a raft with paper scissors ! '

But still the poplars took no notice, and went on laboriously to lay shadows along the road, and the trousers had again business in jumping them all.

Wasn't that someone whistling behind ? No real person, only Funny Fellow making noises and rustling among the leaves. Perhaps she must whistle back to him ? Kata was not good at whistling ; she made a noise, more like a squeak than a whistle. It sounded exactly as though someone else had made it. She stopped abruptly and listened to the chirping of the crickets. They never missed a note, were never out of tune. Was it really crickets that made that noise ? It sounded as though it were the grass, or the blinking stars themselves.

There was silence now. No ; she was not going to whistle any more to that fool behind. Let him see that she was not afraid. Not afraid, not afraid—who was afraid ? Not she ! Jump one more shadow, then run for a while, and he would be left far behind, a feeble, foolish fellow, squatting in the ditch.

None followed her now. Sigismund Edward Waldemar went on his way towards the masts, gently swaying, glittering in the morning sun. Light and secure he went, as one who

has cast from him the heaviest burden that keeps back from success : fear.

The moon was sleepy. The poplars too had left her, no need to jump the obstacle of their shadow any more. Her own shadow, grown vague and lanky, danced absurdly along the bank over the ditch. And now, as the moon inclined more and more downwards, as it hung above shapeless trees, as the mist in the valleys turned dark, and the silver of the road grey, suddenly a new wayfarer stepped alongside Kata to keep her company. This new comrade was the reality of her home, with memories of her bed. The recollection of soft blankets, crumpled sheets, long-known pillows. All friends and protectors against this strange world, a hundred times more distant of her sea adventures than her home nights, smelling of linen and warm blankets, were.

The moon went down and along with it Kata's imaginary world. What remained was a pale reflection in the west, and a faint memory of things she had thought. The contest was now between the two opposing antagonists : between the dull night about her, and the picture of her home nights. And still she went on, but along with her fear she had left her fancy behind. She hardly saw the road. A dull grey vaguely showed her the direction.

Where was her goal ? The masts with gaudy flags fluttering in the morning sun. It all seemed so far now. Péter said that you could walk for ten days to reach it, or even more. He did not seem to know, either. It would be nice to lie down now, to nestle comfortably into the well-known hollows of her bed. ' Now I've had enough ! ' Involuntarily she spoke these words aloud, and at the sound of her own voice, shuddered, as though awaking from a dream. She stopped to listen. Not Waldemar, the valiant

youth, but Kata, the sleepy girl, observed the night around her. For still the night changed, and went on changing. The strange shapes by the roadside filled out ; they were no more two-dimensioned ghosts, but gradually turned into hawthorn bushes. The bracken ceased making stupid faces at her ; the stars grew few and faint, then, suddenly, a light green breath, the first colour, stretched over the damp grass.

At seven o'clock in the morning, when the peacocks of Egervár screeched their vilest ; when the dew was still bright on the Maréchal Niel roses ; when Annus, the scullion, swept the stone stairs ; when Zsiga, the gardener's boy, threw down his rake to get a pebble and hit an impertinent sparrow ; when cook was making coffee in the kitchen and Lajos building well-balanced towers with the Louis XV furniture in the blue drawing-room ; when Gábor, the second footman, with an ever-recurring pang of conscience, emptied yesterday's cigar ash out of the window ; when the maids were dusting, and Mazelle, red-faced and panting, fought her daily battle with boot-buttons ; when, as I say, all this was happening, and Egervár opening its many eyes, a sleepy, dishevelled little girl approached the house, running Indian fashion, from bush to bush.

Her hair was wet with dew, her navy-blue sailor suit full of thistle, and the cap—Waldemar's cap—was nowhere. Perhaps it was drying in the morning sun, under a briar, and the pleasure it gave to whomever was its finder was the only positive outcome of this nightly adventure.

So far, all went well. Kata reached her home unnoticed, undressed, shivering, and threw the bundle of damp clothes, together with all thought of ships and cabin boys, under the bed. Now for sleep and dreams, not of the sea ! Good night to you, Sigismund Edward Waldemar !

At breakfast you cannot talk about these things. The whole morning goes by, but there is too much sun and too much talk. In vain did Péter query with eyebrows going up ; his sister's reply was a sulky, 'Leave me alone !' To his sarcastic grin : 'Very well, then I won't tell you anything.'

At last the cool evening brought harmony into her feelings, as cool evenings in summer do, and Kata ran her fingers through the dark hair on the back of her brother's head.

'Come, Péter ; I'll tell you all about it.' And the two again sought refuge in the empty schoolroom.

At first she hesitated in her recital, but as she went on, shaping her story more and more, she got into the swing of it.

' . . . I saw them all sit round the fire, so I hid in the grass, and crawled nearer, as much as I dared. I listened to their talk, quite certain it was a band of robbers. I saw them empty gold from one bag into another.

'I thought of joining them, but then remembered that Mother and Father would not be very glad if I were to become the chief of a band, instead of the captain of a ship.'

'It's a lie ! You made it all up, Kat ! There were no robbers there at all. You were simply frightened in the dark, and so you came back. I knew how it would be.'

'That's not true ! I wasn't frightened, I tell you ; I was not frightened. Never again shall I tell you about anything that happens to me.'

Her pretty story was wrecked on Péter's disbelief.

Kata was left alone in the darkening room. She pulled out the drawer of her desk, where she kept her most treasured belongings, and took out from it her grandmother's Christmas present, a soft-bound, lovely book, that could be locked with a tiny golden key. 'My First Diary' stood diagonally,

written with elaborate gold lettering, across one corner. Inside, however, there was no diary. There was nothing but thick, shiny, blank pages. Such immaculate whiteness was much too lovely to spoil with her sprawling letters. Besides, she hated writing.

Now, for the last time before spoiling them, she gently stroked with one finger over the pages, feeling the cool smoothness of the paper ; then, turning back to the beginning, she dipped her pen into the ink and wrote, with large, uncertain block letters : ' THE GREAT ADVENTURE.' Then she looked out of the window, and watched the sun go down behind the distant hills. She watched the pink light fade from the row of poplars, and a purple cloud grow for all the world more and more like a dog biting into the tail of a fish. At last she drew a small flower under her large heading. Then she continued to gaze out of the window.

Mazelle came into the room, bringing a lighted lamp.

' Why are you writing in the dark, *Catherine* ? Oh, it is your *journal* you are writing, is it ? '

' No, I have written a story ; but I've finished it.'

And carefully Kata closed the book, that still contained nothing beyond the heading and the little ornament, turned the key, holding it with two fingers ; then, slipping the book back into the drawer, she stepped to the window and leant far out over the depth. Something fell from her hand, lightly, as only a tiny golden key would fall from a high tower window, down into the moat where the water-lilies are silent in the dark. As lightly it fell as the key to the first chapter of youth is lost, as noiselessly as the reminiscence of childish adventure fades.

Somes, Roumania.

THE RIVER.

*And now the water quickens and gleams
 At smoke-grey distance and dimpled edge,
 And deeply dipped from the soundless green
 Where the fluttering shadows of leaves are seen,
 Tossed from the blade like a crowd of dreams,
 Scatters, and pearls the sedge.*

*Strange it will seem when the fire burns low,
 And fog hangs over the lamp and book,
 To think of reeds, and an empty sky ;
 The warmth of the sun on hand and eye ;
 And weeds that rippled under the flow
 Like sirens the stream forsook.*

*Slowly we slip through an age-green veil—
 Leaves of willow that dip in the sun.
 Swift flows the river in evening dream,
 And for us who listen, out of the stream
 Comes the song that is heard from hill and sail
 Wherever free waters run.*

*The light is gone, and the last kiss over ;
 A wind is stirring through leaf and hair.
 We have had our moment, the river knows,
 That makes but a murmur, and darker flows.
 O what stories of loved and lover,
 River, you onward bear !*

MARJORIE STANNARD.

BY THE WAY.

A HAPPY New Year—how happy? And how new? Violence and misery are not new, neither are they happy. Is it possible to hope that 1939 really will be new, in the sense that peace and justice may prevail in this maelstrom of civilization that we call the twentieth century?

* * *

‘Japan,’ so we are told by one of its inspired news services, ‘now wants lasting peace in East Asia . . . the power with whom Japan means to co-operate in the construction of New China is Great Britain.’ Perhaps: memories grow shorter as the world grows older—and yet it will be nearly as long before the horrors of the shambles into which Japan has plunged China pass from memory as it assuredly will be before the world forgets the barbarities of the Germans towards the Jews.

* * *

The best of all detective stories, namely, *Trent's Last Case*, by E. C. Bentley, opens with the question, ‘Between what matters and what seems to matter how shall the world judge wisely?’ It is a question that has never yet been answered. The other day a public meeting was held in London which was addressed by two members of the Christian faith, by a Hindoo, a Muslim, and a Jew—these spoke on those truths that were basic to all and the need in this heaving world for fellowship. Put into practice widely, the principles underlying this meeting would not only make all future wars impossible, but would usher in in every way the millennium for mankind. It was the first meeting of

the kind held here for years, and it was attended by a large and deeply interested audience. On the same day an arm belonging to a defunct female was discovered on a stretch of beach. It was on the next day that Mr. Bentley's question recurred to my mind ; there was no mention in any paper of the meeting, there was mention to the extent of columns in every paper of the arm. Yet we have the nerve to talk of *homo sapiens*.

* * *

The age of reticence, we know, is dead—and it was not even given military honours at its funeral. Nevertheless, its virtues can seldom have been more strikingly neglected than by Mary Repington in her autobiography, *Thanks for the Memory* (Constable, 8s. 6d. n.). Miss Mary North married Sir William Garstin, was received into the Roman Catholic faith in opposition to his wishes, had an affair with Major à Court who later became, by a change of name, Lt.-Col. Repington, the military correspondent first of *The Times* and then of the *Morning Post*, vowed—as did he—to end the affair, failed—as did he—to resist temptation, was divorced accordingly, and now has written the story of her inner, stressful, and yet happy, life with him. The pages of this book recount without reservation or apology those facts and feelings which the majority of women would far rather die than reveal, and it is to be doubted whether the revelations really reflect credit upon any concerned.

* * *

If anyone were asked to produce proof to support the contention that the standards of criticism of this generation have gone seriously astray, he could hardly do better than put in as evidence Hugh Kingsmill's *D. H. Lawrence* (Methuen, 10s. 6d. n.). Lawrence alive attracted much attention and had a great number of readers and defenders. About

Lawrence dead there have already been many books—and yet, if Mr. Kingsmill is at all to be believed, and his book gives every sign of careful and conscientious work, what a nasty backbiting beast Lawrence was, and what a set he lived with and upon ! Some of the stories sound incredible, and would be but for Lawrence's books. It used to be an old saying that every nation gets the government it deserves ; no one has as yet been cruel enough to avow that it also gets the literature it deserves. Mr. Kingsmill has written a biography that is of great interest as a lively study of some very unpleasant people, all of whom seem to have fought venomously among themselves.

★ ★ ★

Last month I was reluctantly compelled to comment on the complete incomprehensibility of Miss Laura Riding's collected poems : now we have the *Collected Poems* of Robert Graves (Cassell, 10s. 6d. n.) and at the end of the most egotistical of forewords Mr. Graves acknowledges the benefits he has received from the ' constructive and detailed criticism ' of his friend : he even says that after meeting with her work and herself he ' slowly began to revise his whole attitude to poetry.' That was a pity, for it cannot be said that this collection improves as it proceeds. It is never quite as lacking as is the work of his adviser, but it is writing that can hardly hope to add to the high reputation Mr. Graves has deservedly gained from his historical novels. English poetry, what is it ? Where is it going to ? Has everybody, all those that the world has, up to now, agreed to call great, been ' out of step except our Jock ' ? No other conclusion can be drawn from this perplexed and perplexing volume.

★ ★ ★

It is a relief to turn to crime, which never ceases, nor the attraction of murder—in fiction at all events. From Constable come two of varying degrees of excellence. Neal Shepherd began very well in *Death Walks Softly*; he has not quite fulfilled his promise in his second murder *Death Flies Low* (7s. 6d. n.). To some extent he has made good use of technical knowledge concerning factory organization and mechanical production, though it is hard to discover what the directors of the company concerned were about, for none of them is so much as even mentioned, but he has made the mistake of superimposing upon his criminal mystery an altogether fantastic and misleading structure of political concern, and his first chapter is enough to deter any normally intelligent reader. After that the story improves with occasional recurrences of the same errors, and ends by presenting the reader with quite an ingenious affair. But the book is not in the same class as Henry Wade's *Released for Death* (7s. 6d. n.). Henry Wade is, of course, a writer of long experience, but he has seldom done better. And his story is not the usual jig-saw puzzle at all. The murderer is not concealed, and yet the interest and the dramatic intensity are retained until the end, or at least until very near the end. A very clever, powerful piece of work.

And yet I am not sure that I do not prefer James Spenser. He has not the technical ability or the invention of Henry Wade, but his knowledge of the underworld is first-hand. Transactions on the Stock Exchange are not, it must be admitted, carried out as in *Crime against Society* (Longmans, 7s. 6d. n.); but that really matters little. Here we have again by the author of *Limey* a further representation, fictional as in *The Wheels*, of London's underworld, a grim, violent and in places sadistic story, but always gripping and with

that indefinable tang of knowledge. All the same, is there, it may be wondered, hatred for the 'College Coppers'?

★ ★ ★

From crime to Nature—which is not by any means always criminal. Frank Melland, in his account of Rabinek in these pages, wrote as one having authority and justifiably : few know Africa as he. He has now put down the result of his observations, his inferences, and his readings in *Elephants in Africa* (Country Life, 10s. 6d. n.). Ever since that moment, memorable to me, when I ran unexpectedly into a herd in a forest in Kenya I have read all I could in relation to the wisest and most interesting of beasts ; it is therefore not wholly without knowledge that I say that this is—especially when its conciseness is considered—the most complete of accounts. For any who are at all interested in this engrossing study it is from first to last fascinating. The drawings by Stuart Tresilian are no doubt accurate—Mr. Melland vouches for so much—I would much have preferred photographs, but, apart from that, there can be nothing but commendation.

★ ★ ★

Of all our writers of established reputation few remain so persistently vigorous and various as Hilaire Belloc. Not to be outdone by middle-age, as youthful as ever, he has now produced a brace of books—a characteristically lively and historical *Return to the Baltic* (Constable, 12s. 6d. n.), a re-visitation after forty-three years, not 'a peregrination' but 'a glimpse' together with memories and speculations, the whole illustrated by Edmond Warre's pencil : and, secondly, a study of Louis XIV under the title *Monarchy* (Cassell, 12s. 6d. n.). This is written with all the old fire and with even more than the old provocativeness ; for example, this comment on the breaking up by Mazarin of the 'German menace'—'for more than two hundred years to come the

Germans did not combine, even for one of those brief episodes of crude unity which they attempt at long intervals in their tribal story.' This study could hardly have been written except by one who had not only France in his blood but also Roman Catholicism, to the opponents of which the author is scarcely fair; and few Americans would agree that their President is increasingly an example of Monarchy, but, agree or disagree, few readers will fail to be interested.

* * *

History of another sort, impartial and weighty, is given us once again by the Cambridge University Press from Professor G. G. Coulton. Not only is there the cheap edition (12s. 6d. n.) of his well-known *Social Life in Britain from the Conquest to the Reformation*, but also his new *Medieval Panorama* (15s. n.)—not extracts as the first but bringing 'some sort of order into a mass of details,' in other words learnedly, yet never heavily, portraying the life that is gone, 'the English scenes from Conquest to Reformation.' A delightful volume both to look at and to delve into.

* * *

I select for my last book for mention this month one which has a seasonable flavour when so many are just beginning diaries they will soon fail to keep. Yet people have kept, and will keep, them—and here is Lord Ponsonby, most indefatigable and erudite of diary-readers, to give us in *The Little Torch* (Routledge, 10s. 6d. n.) a quotation from no fewer than 222 diaries, one quotation for each day. Here are quotations from Edward VI and Queen Victoria, Pepys and Evelyn, Byron and Arnold Bennett, Walter Scott and James Woodforde and many, many another. A fresh, unusual, interesting, and amusing anthology, very daintily produced and with zodiac designs by T. F. Poulton.

G.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 183.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 31st January.

'But Rose cross'd the road
In her ——— new ——— ;
I intended an Ode ;
And it turn'd to a Sonnet.'

1. 'Did He who made the ——— make thee ?'
2. 'Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to ——— hold.'
3. 'And the ———, too long pent,
To his ears was evident.
The young deities discuss'd
Laws of form, and metre just,'
4. 'Away ! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of ——— ;
5. 'And wild roses, and ivy ———,
With its dark buds and leaves wandering astray ;
6. '——— the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree boles are in tiny leaf,'

Answer to Acrostic 181, November number : 'Called him soft names in many a *musèd rhyme*' (Keats : 'Ode to a Nightingale'). 1. *MasteR* (Emerson 'Give all to Love'). 2. *UnderneatH* (Cowley : 'The Epicure'). 3. *SaY* (Burns : 'The Fond Kiss'). 4. *ElM* (Arnold : 'The Scholar-Gipsy'). 5. *DesireE* (Robert Herrick : 'To Electra').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Mrs. M. Wells, 10 Brodrick Road, Wandsworth Common, S.W.17, and Mr. N. Patrick Cowan, British Consulate, Helsingfors, Finland, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY 1939.

HENRY CAESAR.

BY WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

I.

HIGH in the Palace of the Popes at Avignon, in a small chamber that was very richly tapestried, sat, on a certain day near the threshold of Summer in the year of Grace 1313, Pope Clement the Fifth.

He was alone, seated in a cushioned and finely carved chair, and his face was contorted with pain. He was a man dying from an incurable inward disease, and knew it; nevertheless, he showed it little to those about him, and not at all in public. He had a long, cadaverous face, with deeply sunken dark eyes under brows meeting in an habitual, worried frown over a high-bridged, Caesaresque nose; his lips were well moulded but sensual, and his chin, under them, was strong. It was the face of a man who, though he was barely fifty, had travelled into the innermost labyrinth of suffering, but been embittered by his wanderings there rather than spiritually exalted, and the bitterness had become a kind of obstinacy. A Frenchman, he had been Bishop of Bordeaux before his election, and at that time a subject, therefore, of England, and it had been hoped that his freedom from Italian prejudice would make him a Pope of more European sympathy and understanding. But his painful and terrible malady had supplied in the place of the old Italian bias a bias of an even more warped centralisation. His very astuteness in policy was little less than a pathological double dealing.

His spasm over, he stretched out a thin, graceful hand towards a small silver bell upon the marble table at his side. But before ringing it, he paused, his fingers just touching it, and gazed into space, frowning. Then, with a sigh and a shrug of the shoulders under his white cape, he rang the bell firmly.

It was answered by a short, corpulent, elderly French priest.

‘Is the Archbishop here?’ asked the Pope.

‘Yes, Holiness.’

‘I will see him at once—and do not admit Father Bernardino until he has gone.’

The priest withdrew, softly rather than silently, to return in a moment and announce, almost confidentially, so low was his tone: ‘His Grace the Archbishop-Elector of Treves!’ After which he as softly withdrew again, leaving the two alone.

The man whom he had ushered in was dressed in a purple robe, sashed in black, and a large, richly chased, jewelled and ornamental cross of shining gold hung by a delicate golden chain from his neck. He was tall and well-built, with a masterful and yet sly face. As was the Pope, he was clean-shaven; and a bush of greying, dark hair enclosed his tonsure.

They greeted one another with ceremony, a little warily. Then, motioning his visitor to sit, the Pope opened the business between them without further preliminary, speaking in a soft and yet determined tone.

‘Your brother is outwearying my patience, Baldwin.’

The Archbishop shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands.

‘I am unhappy to learn as much, Holiness,’ he said, ‘but not surprised. Nor did I receive your summons in blindness. Let us speak freely.’

‘I ask for no better,’ replied the Pope. ‘First, tell me : what is your own latest news of him?’

‘That he is in camp at Pisa,’ answered the Archbishop, his eyes involuntarily staring, and then narrowing. ‘What is it has happened since *that* news of him?’ he asked anxiously.

‘He has put Robert of Naples to the ban of the Empire!’ said the Pope quietly, and the Archbishop drew in his breath through his teeth as if from a sudden physical hurt.

‘King Robert?’ the Archbishop whispered, half awed, half incredulous.

‘There is no doubt of it,’ returned Clement. ‘I have it from a sure source—and only in advance of your brother’s own courier, who, I am informed, has been taken ill on the road.’

‘King Robert!’ repeated the Archbishop, still in a whisper. ‘But why, Holiness, why?’ he asked in his ordinary tones, master once more over his own composure.

‘This is a time, Baldwin,’ said the Pope, leaning forward in his chair, ‘for plain speaking. First, let us go back a little and refresh our memories. When Albert of Austria was murdered by his nephew John of Suabia at the Bridge of Brugg and the question of electing the new Emperor became unexpectedly insistent—for the murder was so untimely that we had no King of the Romans already in our eye for the future—I think it was yourself who suggested your brother. Was it not?’ he asked sharply, his face a little contorted, but perhaps from a twinge of pain rather than in malice.

‘I do not deny it, Holiness,’ replied Baldwin of Treves uneasily and yet with a show of firmness. ‘Right from boyhood Henry had seemed of a quiet and passive character.’

The Pope laughed drily, and leaned back again more comfortably in his chair.

‘And since we needed an Emperor of a quiet and passive character we swayed the election in his favour,’ he said.

‘It cost me a great deal of money,’ the Archbishop muttered. ‘Peter of Mayence, I remember, was very stubborn ! And Henry has not yet repaid me an English pound of it.’

‘Nor me a Christian obedience,’ said the Pope.

There was a brief pause.

‘We have both of us been . . . disappointed,’ murmured Clement.

‘I have sometimes wondered,’ said the Archbishop, as though thinking out aloud, ‘whether it has been the influence of his wife. Once I did certainly think so, but since—rest her soul !—Margaret of Brabant is dead, and he still persists in the same . . . what shall I say ? . . .’

“Characteristics ?” suggested the Pope with a faint smile.

‘The apt word, Holiness,’ the Archbishop went on, bowing slightly, and he laughed before continuing : ‘So I can only suppose that I never knew my brother.’

‘You parted young,’ said Clement, ‘you to Mother Church and he to his patrimony. Still, it is a pity,’ he added with a sharper look, ‘that you were not more intimate. We should have had less of a coil now.’

It was both a sigh and a rebuke in one, and the Archbishop flushed.

‘What will the King of Naples do ?’ he asked, abruptly changing the subject.

‘What *we* cannot,’ answered the Pope grimly. ‘Laugh ! Robert dearly loves a quarrel, with cause or without, and now he has cause. But here lies the point, Baldwin : the Papacy has interests in Naples, and I looked to the Emperor to respect them. If I side with your brother, I lose a support dear to my heart and my projects ; if I side with the

King of Naples, I lose my tempering voice in the counsels of the Empire. Your brother has forced the issue. To make his ban effective he and I must stand side by side : and I cannot so stand with him. It is against my interests, Baldwin—yet it is bad for Christendom for Pope and Emperor to be at odds. I say he has forced the issue without due regard for my position.’

The Archbishop fidgeted in his seat. He was by no means unconcerned : to be rebuked by the Pope was an unpleasantness ; to have been duped, as he conceived it, by his brother, was almost as undignified as an unexpected buffet in the face from one of his own chaplains. But before he could frame an answer consonant with his own pride and independence, the Pope, in a kind of paroxysm of spiteful anger, burst out :

‘ I tell you, I thought we had an Emperor of good wax that we could shape as we would, a man blindly pious—as so he seemed—a man of no imperial blood, who might be so dazzled by his sudden elevation that he would play with his purple as a child might with a glittering toy, while the business of Europe could be played on our own fingers like the string in a game of cat’s cradle ! And such a man *was* Henry, Count of Luxemburg, until he felt how a sceptre balances in the hand—and then he thought himself Caesar indeed, “ Henry Caesar ”, as he signs his letters to me,’ he added with a touch of scorn.

‘ As he is entitled to sign,’ interposed the Archbishop softly. ‘ We *made* him Emperor ! ’

‘ In the hope and expectation of a catspaw ! ’ said Clement bluntly, and looked at the Emperor’s brother with a challenging, direct gaze.

Baldwin of Luxemburg and Treves did not avoid the Pope’s eyes ; he even faintly smiled into them, but it was

with a smile more astute than pleasant, the hard, shell-like and yet modulated smile of a negotiator.

‘Holiness,’ he answered quietly, ‘my interests as a churchman march with your own; my interests as an Elector march with those of my fellow Electors: and by his mad expedition into Italy—raising his banner, he said, for the composing of Christian faction!—and by there allying himself with the White Party instead of the Black, my brother has disappointed the churchman in me and failed the Elector. I, too, expected him to be more malleable, Holiness. Yet,’ he continued, spreading out his hands, ‘he is my brother. I would bring him to reason rather than set in motion too heavy a . . . punishment.’

‘And if he will not be brought to reason?’ asked the Pope gently, though his lips, as he spoke, quivered from an inward gripe.

‘What has your Holiness in mind?’ inquired Baldwin, and smoothed his robes with a jewelled, beautiful hand.

‘What I have already done,’ replied Clement, ‘and it was to tell you of it, Baldwin, that I bade you to this private conference. I would not take so good a friend by surprise.’

The Pope’s voice was a little malicious, as the Archbishop well appreciated, and yet there was a certain sincerity in the statement, even if only a politic sincerity. That, too, the Archbishop recognised.

‘What is it your Holiness has done?’ he whispered.

‘I have excommunicated the Emperor,’ said the Pope.

II.

Waleran was not happy. An esquire in the semi-military household of the Archbishop-Elector of Treves, he was used to a kind of romantic splendour in his dress and to riding a

horse of good strain ; as it was, he was garbed as an itinerant medical quack and mounted upon an ass.

Still, there was the other side to the medal : he was not cooped within a castle but on the highway in beautiful weather ; and he was upon a mission of such confidence and importance that he might well look to a substantial reward at the end of it. More than once during his journey—and he was now within two days' ride of the Emperor's camp—he had wondered why he had been chosen by his master for so secret and confidential a task. At first he had only too willingly put it down to his merits ; but reflection had soon told him that more probably it was because he alone, of all the archiepiscopal soldiery, could speak Italian, it being indeed his mother-tongue in the truest sense, for his mother was a Genoese. He was as much used, moreover, to hearing 'Valerano' from her lips as 'Waleran' from his father's, so that the name 'Valerano' as a disguise had the merit of being familiar and not likely to give him away by his not recognising it at a critical moment.

He wished that the Archbishop had told him a little more. To some extent he was carrying out his commission in the dark—and at the thought he laughed, the landscape was so bathed in sunlight. The trees, though still fresh in their summer crowns, were already wearying of the monotonous, golden heat. If only there were a breeze, he grumbled to himself, or an inn within sight.

He carried no letter, only a message memorised word by word : 'Beware of the Pulcian Mountain.' It made no sense to him ; but that was his secret mission—to breathe those five words in the Emperor's ear in the midst of relating the ordinary news of his brother's health and delivering the gossip of the archiepiscopal and electoral court.

A courier, he knew, had preceded him by a day, bearing a letter to the Emperor, and ordered to founder a dozen horses if necessary, speed having been impressed upon him as essential. Dietrich was the courier ; and Waleran promised himself a carouse with Dietrich if they met in the Emperor's camp.

It was only towards the beginning of dusk that he came to an inn at last, but it was the poorest of poor places, little more than an elongated hovel with stabling attached. Cursing underbreath, he was about to lead his ass towards the entrance into the stable courtyard, which was as full of muck and fouled straw as an ill-kept byre, when he heard running footsteps and a light call in a girl's voice.

He turned swiftly, and saw a girl with uncovered head coming towards him. She broke into a little run as soon as she knew that she had been noticed.

' Oh, sir,' she cried breathlessly when she had reached his side, ' for the love of Our Lady come to our help.'

' What is the trouble, damsel ? ' he asked.

' Oh, doctor, good doctor, there is a man grievously hurt in my sister's cottage. When we saw you ride by and knew by your dress what you are, we praised God—and I have run after you. Oh, come, for the love of Heaven !'

His disguise as a wandering quack, he reflected, had its disadvantages ; but he had not the heart to refuse her. Besides, as a soldier and not unfamiliar with wounds, he might, if, as he shrewdly suspected, the man had been stabbed, be at least of a certain practical help.

' Who is it ? ' he asked, as he turned, and, leading his ass, walked at her side. ' Your father or your brother ? '

' Oh, no,' she answered quickly, ' a stranger. We found him this morning, unconscious outside the door. He must

have been trying to arouse us when his senses left him. It isn't far—that cottage over there.'

'Have you had the priest to him?' he asked.

'No,' she replied. 'He made us swear not to fetch any priest: the very naming of a priest seemed to make him worse. He was in a frenzy until we promised. At least, so much as we could understand,' she added. 'He is a foreigner, an Englishman or a German.'

Probably one of the Emperor's mercenaries, thought Waleran, a straggler.

'How is he hurt?' he inquired. 'Stabbed?'

'Stabbed,' she echoed. 'But here we are. Please enter, good doctor.'

He entered—to be twice shocked: in the first place the man was dead; in the second he was Dietrich.

He examined the body swiftly in the fading light. Dietrich had been stabbed in the side, and though the cottagewoman and her sister had done their best to bandage him, he had clearly been beyond their unskilled aid. Indeed, Waleran doubted whether a qualified surgeon could have saved him. He drew the dead man's riding-cloak over the grey, contorted face, and turned to the two sisters, who were standing at the doorway of the poor room, staring in. He looked at them curiously. There must, he thought, be some ten years' difference between their ages. Both were tall and slim, but while the younger was dark, the elder was swarthy, with a large nose and a sullen expression. He had a sudden guess that they might be half-sisters—as, subsequently, he found was the truth. Each, in her way, was handsome, but the younger alone was femininely appealing, the other having an almost masculine carriage and grim self-containedness, and Waleran at once took a dislike to her.

'There is nothing to be done,' he said curtly, 'except to

bury him, and that, by your leave, I will do myself in the still of the dark.'

'For which I shall truly thank you,' answered the elder sister, unbending a little, while the younger unfeignedly shuddered.

'I must find a lodging for the night,' he said. 'Tomorrow, I am for Pisa.'

'After you have buried him,' the elder sister replied, 'you can have his pallet.'

He did not exactly fancy the suggestion, but it would be no worse than the inn.

'But there is my ass,' he said.

'We have an outhouse.'

He thought for a moment, and then accepted the offer. It would at least give him a chance of investigating the circumstances of Dietrich's murder—for it could be nothing less. But whether by a highway robber, or by one deliberately sent to take the letter which he carried, in which case either a spy of the King of Naples or of the Pope, it was impossible to determine.

But first he had to make sure whether the letter was missing or not. He searched the dead man's clothing, the two sisters still looking on. He found nothing, and said so.

'There is a purse,' murmured the younger sister from the doorway.

'It was empty,' said her elder casually. 'Here it is,' she added, and took an empty steel-meshed purse from her bosom and handed it over to Waleran, stepping a little into the room to do so.

He looked at her as he took it, but she showed no embarrassment. He knew that he would never be able to bring the theft home to her, and shrugged his shoulders.

'You had better keep it,' he said gruffly. 'It is not mine.'

He handed it back, and she returned to her place beside her sister.

‘O Marietta . . .’ he heard the younger begin in a low voice.

‘Peace, Lisa!’ whispered her sister fiercely. ‘We go to prepare your supper,’ she went on over her shoulder to Waleran, and the two moved away from the door.

Left alone, Waleran searched his dead friend more carefully, but still failed to find the Archbishop’s letter to the Emperor. He straightened himself, and sighed. There was nothing to do except to bury the body in secret.

He went outside to his tethered and patient ass. It was now quite dark.

‘This way,’ said a soft voice, and Lisa came out with a lantern.

She led him to an outhouse behind the cottage, set down the lantern, went quickly away, and then returned with a bucket of water.

He thanked her, and began unloading the donkey of its panniers. Then he fed him and let him drink. The girl stayed, watching him care for his beast, and he began to question her.

‘Do you live alone with your sister?’

‘Yes. She is a widow.’

‘Have you no father or mother?’

‘Both died together, doctor, in the last plague,’ she answered sadly, and he purposely allowed a slight pause to intervene. Then he returned to his questioning.

‘I think you are not happy, damsel, with your sister.’

It was too dark in the outhouse to see her face, and the rays from the lantern at their feet did not reach up so far.

‘No,’ she replied, and turned suddenly and ran indoors.

Looking about him he caught sight of a spade standing up-

right in the earth beside the outhouse door. He wondered, a little sardonically, if it had been planted there by Marietta to remind him of his task to come. He made a quick decision, took the spade, and strode across the little plot of ground at the back of the cottage. It was about half an acre in extent, and a narrow brook ran at the bottom of it beside three or four olive trees. A moon in its third quarter had by now begun to rise, and he could see sufficiently for his purpose. Near one of the olive trees he started to dig.

‘Do you usually dig at night?’ asked a gentle voice.

Waleran looked up sharply. On the other side of the narrow brook stood a priest, garbed as a Dominican. A pony was browsing at a little distance off.

‘Only when necessary,’ returned Waleran coolly, and he continued his digging.

‘You are in haste, I see, to finish,’ said the priest. ‘I wonder if I can help you . . . later.’

The grave by that time was nearly dug, and Waleran rested upon the spade, and he looked across at the priest with more attention. There had been something in the other’s tone that had suggested an unwelcome knowledge.

‘“Later”?’ he repeated.

‘First to carry the body,’ replied the priest calmly, ‘and then, by your leave, to commit it to the earth with the proper prayers. You see,’ the priest went on, ‘I saw the poor man taken in by the two women who dwell here. But as I had met the man on the road previously, and been roundly cursed for my attempts at friendliness, I knew I should not have been pleasantly received at his bedside—if they gave him a bed.’

‘I am giving him one now,’ said Waleran through a twisted mouth. ‘Are you the priest in this part?’ he asked.

‘No, a traveller only, a passer-by. I am Father Ber-

nardino,' the priest added with a touch of pride, 'and I am the Emperor's confessor.'

Waleran breathed a sigh of relief. He would be glad of help in his task, and for a priest to pray for his friend ; and the Emperor's confessor was not a man, fortunately, of whom he had to be suspicious. He accepted the offer gratefully.

Father Bernardino agilely jumped the little brook, and the two men went into the cottage and presently bore out between them the body of the dead Dietrich, wrapped closely in the cloak which he had worn in life. During their passage out they were joined by Marietta and Lisa who, when Waleran had explained the priest's presence, followed them to the graveside and stood silently watching as the body was lowered into the earth and while the priest murmured the service for the dead. The whole scene was palely and bluishly etched in the moonlight. Then, when Waleran began to fill in the grave, the two sisters returned into the cottage after extending an invitation to Father Bernardino to join Waleran and themselves at their supper.

The meal was meagre, consisting of goat's-milk cheese and salad, and a bottle of the coarse local wine. But the two travellers were hungry and thankful of any sufficient breaking of their fast.

At first they ate in silence, then the priest turned to Waleran with a questioning smile.

'Have you come far, sir doctor ?' he asked.

Waleran, about to reply unguardedly that he had come directly from Avignon, suddenly checked himself, he knew not why, and answered instead, with a simulated laugh :

'From everywhere, father, it seems ; certainly from Bohemia.'

'And you find—ahem !—profitable patients on the way ?'

‘Not when they are already—dead,’ answered Waleran pointedly, and then, more nonchalantly, added: ‘Still, body and soul, as you see, father, are yet together.’

‘What know you of the healing art?’ pursued the Emperor’s confessor, genuinely curious even in his sarcasm, and there had assuredly been sarcasm in the question. Traveling quacks were not beloved of the priesthood, which scented in them an inimical influence in the countryside.

‘Well,’ replied Waleran truthfully, ‘I can wash a wound and bind it with the best.’ Then he added, a little slyly: ‘And I can sometimes persuade old women that a particular salve will make away with a wart.’

There was no laughter at his remark, scarcely amusement, and he glanced up from his food to find Father Bernardino regarding him with a somewhat grim intentness. Was the priest, thought Waleran suddenly, taking him for a Black, or Guelf, spy, and, consequently, as a good servant of the Emperor, being suspicious? The idea tickled him, and he laughed involuntarily.

‘What is amusing you?’ asked Father Bernardino, and suspicion was now definitely riding in his glance.

‘I am laughing,’ answered Waleran, ‘because you are not the first, father, to take me for too young for knowledge! But I was the favourite pupil of Melchior Claes of Prague,’ he added truthfully, though Melchior Claes was no physician, ambulant or other.

‘What are you, then, by birth?’ asked the priest swiftly and as if by way of riposte.

‘My mother is a Genoese and my father came from Brabant,’ Waleran replied, again truthfully.

The Emperor’s confessor nodded as if satisfied, and Waleran felt that the tension had eased.

Both travellers being tired, they did not linger in gossip

after the meal, the priest taking leave at once, for he would sleep, he informed Marietta, at a certain monastery some two miles farther on, whither he had been bound when he saw the grave being dug and had offered his help both as a Christian and a priest.

‘If, as you say, you are bound for the Emperor’s camp,’ he said courteously to Waleran, ‘we may chance to meet again on the road, for I am returning to him after an absence to visit my ailing mother.’

After he had gone, Waleran retired to the pallet on which Dietrich had died only a few hours previously. As a soldier he felt no qualms : he had slept in worse circumstances ; nevertheless, he did not sleep well, but that came from seeing the face of Lisa too often and too disturbingly.

III.

When, the next morning, he went out to prepare his ass for the day’s journeying, he found her in the outhouse, stroking the beast and feeding him.

She shrank away as he entered, and her eyes seemed dumbly to beg for his forgiveness.

‘I couldn’t help it,’ she murmured. ‘He is so gentle an ass. I could hug him.’

‘A good ass, yes,’ he answered, and patted the girl on the shoulder in reassurement that she had done no harm. She winced away from his touch.

‘What is the matter?’ he asked. ‘I am no sorcerer!’

She slipped her dress from her shoulder in mute reply. The flesh was wealed.

‘What has happened?’ he muttered, and his eyes were suddenly blazing with anger.

‘She beat me. She is always beating me. Oh, take me

with you—anywhere, so that it is away from here, away from *her*. If you go without me, I shall drown myself. The brook falls into a deep pool over there. I shall drown myself,' she repeated. 'She has beaten me ever since father died, day by day, for I never please her. I shall drown myself. By the Mother of God, I swear it! Take me away, take me away!' she urged passionately, and her fingers clutched at his hand.

There was his pity and anger at her tale, and there was her attraction for him : either alone he might have combated ; together they were irresistible to his youth and adventurousness.

'Go and get ready,' he said briefly, and began to put the panniers on the back of the ass.

'My bundle's here,' she answered shyly, and showed it in a corner of the outhouse.

'Then let us go . . . without leavetaking,' he said, and presently he led the ass forth, and Lisa was mounted upon it. They forded the brook at her suggestion, being hidden the while from the cottage by the outhouse and the little group of olives. After crossing a field that sloped downwards, so that again they were hidden, they came to the high-road circuitously and about a half-mile away.

'Now for Pisa—and fortune—and love!' cried Waleran merrily, and he kissed his hand to a lark that was singing overhead.

IV.

A little later on he was singing himself. He was no minstrel, but he could troll one or two military camp-songs, and as they were in his paternally native Brabançon their incomprehensibility saved Lisa a blush or two ; moreover,

since the tunes at least had a gay lilt, now and then she added her own southern treble to his more northern baritone when the refrains returned for the fourth or fifth time, for the songs were not short, being capable also of additional verses according to the singer's bawdy ingenuity.

He was in the midst of one of these extendable marching-songs when they were overtaken by a solitary traveller on a lean, black horse.

He was sufficiently remarkable in appearance for Waleran to stare at him as if fascinated. He was dark of complexion and clean-shaven, with a strong, pointed chin, eyebrows that slanted upwards, a long, depressed nose with a high bridge, and lines like the wake of a boat dropping away from either side to the corners of the thinnish mouth with its protruding underlip. His eyes were piercing and arrogant, and yet at the same time meditative and sad ; and his voice, when he gave Waleran and Lisa greeting, peculiarly and unexpectedly melodious and sweet.

'Whither travel you?' he asked courteously, and as if moved by the politeness of the road rather than by any worse curiosity.

'To Pisa,' replied Waleran. 'And you, sir?' he asked in his turn.

'To Pisa likewise,' answered the other. 'What was it you were singing? I take an interest in songs.'

'A Brabançon marching-ditty,' said Waleran.

'And where did you learn *that*?' instantly asked the other with lifted brows. 'A salve-quack and a war-song are not usually so well acquainted.'

'I was taught it, and many another, too, by a straggler,' explained Waleran warily and on the spur of the moment.

His new companion seemed satisfied, and presently, as they went on together, appeared to fall into an abstraction,

and, so strong was his personality, neither Waleran nor Lisa cared to break it, and themselves grew almost prim in their silence, Lisa riding the ass, and Waleran walking beside it.

The stranger was dressed completely in black, with a black, flowing cloak without sleeves, and a black skull-cap. His hair about it was grizzled. He might have been an ecclesiastic, except that he wore a sword and, besides, had nothing about him of the priest's shuttered self-satisfaction, for his eyes were vivid and sometimes mocking, and in his abstraction he occasionally muttered words which, though nowise contrary to morality of thought, were definitely secular in sympathy.

His unclerical character, indeed, was all the more plain when they were met, about a mile farther on, by the Emperor's confessor, who had reined in his pony at a cross-roads, evidently waiting for them—at least, waiting for Waleran and Lisa, for he seemed taken by surprise to find them in the company of the stranger, a man whom evidently he knew, since he greeted him with a great show of respect, which considerably astonished Waleran, the man in black providing no indications, either in manner or attire, of rank or position, and yet Father Bernardino was almost obsequious in his deference.

For a while they conversed apart, during which time Waleran watched narrowly, wondering who the stranger could be. Instinctively he was glad that his own disguise had apparently stood the test; neither the Emperor's confessor nor the other seemed in the least doubtful of his quackdom—nor, for the matter of that, had Lisa.

He smiled to himself, and looked forward to appearing before her in his full dress as an esquire of the high and mighty Archbishop-Elector of Treves. He was a man to

do credit to any girl ; and she, by her beauty alone, was a girl to do credit even to an Emperor's esquire. He was well pleased suddenly with life, and would have broken out again into song had he not been more than a little awed by the presence of the two men riding about two horses' length ahead, deep in intimate speech.

Suddenly the voice of the man in black was raised in more rhetorical tones, so that what he said could be heard plainly by Waleran behind.

'How long shall she sit solitary, liberty's widow, my city, my fair Florence ! Woe to thee, city of tyrannies, city of ingratiitudes, city of mean thoughts and unclean hands ! Death to the Blacks !' he thundered.

Father Bernardino, glancing covertly back an instant to see if his companion's outburst had provoked too great an attention, answered in a low voice and apparently placatorily, for the other immediately showed signs of impatience, and his reply was again completely audible.

"God *shall* prosper the Emperor, the bringer of peace, the lover of freedom, God's own weapon of justice upon Earth ! The Devil take Robert of Naples and the Pope !'

Once again the Emperor's confessor spoke placatingly : but the man in black burst out with the same vehemence as before :

'If ever a man served the interests of Heaven, then John of Suabia's murder of Albert of Austria was an act of all-governing Fate, since it led to the election at last of a prince with an ideal instead of a policy—and oh, how sick is the world of policies !'

'You speak like the poet that you are, Messer Dante Alighieri,' cried Father Bernardino, and his scorn rasped in his raised voice. 'You impugn Christ's Vicar in his fatherly shepherding !'

‘I accuse him of no true shepherding whatever,’ replied Dante. ‘I accuse him, too, of a policy—and God is not served by a policy!’

‘Poet . . .’ repeated the Emperor’s confessor, scornful still, though careful to remain obsequious to one whom the Emperor himself signally regarded with favour. ‘You poets do not deal in hard, earthly facts.’

‘And you priests only too much!’ retorted Dante, and his scorn was the equal of the other’s and less masked, moreover, in outward politeness. ‘At least we suffer for our dreams,’ the poet went on, ‘and sufficiently, father, to know how steep are the stairs in another’s house, and how harsh is the bread of exile!’

For sole answer, or evasion, the priest pointed ahead. The Emperor’s camp had suddenly come into view as they turned the hill-shoulder of some terraced olive orchards.

V.

The Emperor had decided to break camp at Pisa and march on Florence, that nest of Guelfs, and once Florence was subdued he would be free to attack Robert of Naples.

But he made his preparations with a heavy heart. He did not believe in war, and was forced by circumstances to make it; he believed in universal justice and fraternity, and was compelled to seem the denier of his ideals by his actions. He felt lonely, too: his dead wife had been his only confidante.

His last act before he struck his tents was to visit the Prior of one of the Pisan monasteries, an old man to whom he had taken a liking, and in whose spirituality he had found an echo of his own hopes for the world.

‘I am come to bid farewell, father,’ he said, as the Prior

greeted him at the monastery gate. 'Let me have an hour of peace before I depart on the business of war.'

'Come within to my chamber, my lord,' answered the Prior.

'No,' said the Emperor, shaking his head with a smile. 'It is so hot a day; let us sit in your cloisters.'

Bidding his attendants to wait for him, Henry passed on with the Prior into a place of utter quiet, colonnaded on each of its four equal sides. A broad seat of stone ran continuously under the four colonnades, against the wall, broken only by the two facing arches of entrance into that square of meditation. The sun blazed into the paved middle and deep into two sides. They sat down on the stone seat on that side where it was most shaded. Two monks, who had been pacing the cloisters in conversation, with folded hands and hooded faces, withdrew hastily when they saw the Prior and the Emperor make their approach.

For some while Henry was silent, and the Prior began to study him as though endeavouring to make a new assessment of the man sitting so quietly beside him. He knew him to be at the crisis of his fortunes, and was hoping that his strength of personality would be sufficient for the task which, in defiance of the Pope and the greater fiefs of the Empire alike, he had set himself.

Thus newly assessing his companion—but finding no quality of which he had not been already fully aware and appreciative—the Prior saw a man handsome and well proportioned, with reddish, short hair and a squarish face, a broad, lofty forehead, and arched brows over blue eyes, one of which was slightly disfigured by a squint. This was more apparent when he was angered or particularly excited, or in ill-health; normally it was hardly noticeable unless deliberately observed, either from curiosity, keenness of

sight—as with an artist—or out of malice. But, in whatever category such observation might fall, he never seemed put out of countenance by it. Nevertheless, as the Prior knew, he was not of a placid temper, though magnanimous when touched or stirred at heart, and was sensitive enough in certain other ways : for instance, to any slighting of his imperial dignity.

‘Sometimes I despair,’ said the Emperor suddenly, ‘despair of mankind as the instrument of God’s purpose.’

‘God made them in His own image, sire, and to be His servants,’ murmured the ecclesiastic.

‘And they look for pay for their service,’ said Henry, and it was a kind of retort, ‘when they should serve for love and in worship.’

‘This is no new accusation,’ answered the Prior with a smile.

The Emperor sighed.

‘I hoped to awake them,’ he said. ‘I hoped to arouse their better parts by my trumpet. I was surprised, completely,’ he went on, speaking very simply, ‘when my brother told me, after the murder of Albert of Austria, that the Electors had *me* in their minds as a possible candidate for the imperial throne. I cannot tell you my thoughts : they were so medleyed, father, so upsetting to all my habit of life. Do I weary you?’ he asked abruptly, and his squint was suddenly noticeable as he flashed at the Prior a look of almost suspicious interrogation.

‘In no way, my son : continue.’

‘I never understood,’ pursued Henry, ‘my brother’s interest in pushing me forward with such zeal. We had not been intimates, and our tastes had diverged from boyhood. My wife insisted always that there was some imagined benefit to himself in my becoming Emperor, and that he had my imperial value reckoned to the last groat.’

‘Is that surprising?’ asked the Prior. ‘Is it nothing to have one’s brother Holy Roman Emperor?’

‘My wife was not thinking of Baldwin’s pride,’ answered the Emperor, ‘but of some more material consideration.’

He sighed deeply, and added :

‘I miss her from my side terribly ; she was a wise, as well as a good, woman.’

The Prior crossed himself and murmured a prayer for the soul of the recently dead Empress.

‘I have begun to think,’ muttered Henry, ‘that my brother’s expectations were soon and very sadly disappointed.’

He smiled drily, and then instantly was stern.

‘As they deserved to be,’ he went on, ‘and as the expectations of all the Electors deserved to be—and as the Pope’s likewise deserved to be. I was never the heavy-witted country gentleman that Baldwin believed, and as no doubt he reported me. I was always a dreamer of dreams, pondering upon how dreams such as I had might be made practical for the world. For I am no poet as is our Dante of the Alighieri, and think nothing of a dream as a dream ; it must have a reality. But, in counterpoise,’ he added, turning to the Prior and holding one knee in his clasped hands, ‘the reality which I most value must be the result of a dream, a vision. And I *had* a vision : in my youth, blind and vague ; in my manhood, blunted by lack of opportunity—and then, O miracle, I was elected . . . Emperor ! Father,’ he concluded in a lower tone, ‘it was God spoke !’

He unclasped his hands from about his knee, and leant back against the shadowed wall.

‘I used to dream,’ Henry continued, ‘of a Europe at peace, with a fraternal Pope and Emperor working side by side for the good of mankind, true shepherds of the world.

I thought of them as the twin presiders over a League of All Peoples, with no more wars, and no armies except one for the Emperor to keep a universal justice. A dream? A dream, Prior, which, if carried out, might be the most practical reality ever created by the wits of men. I had often pondered it, and laughed at it—or, I mean, laughed at myself for dreaming it, I, so insignificant a man, a mere Count of Luxemburg. And then, as unexpectedly as an arrow out of an ambush, to be elected as Emperor! I am not yet, father, after four years of imperial power, out of the wonder of it!’

The Prior did not break the brief pause which fell. He knew that a single word might destroy Henry’s mood of self-revelation which, interesting to him as a student of men for its own sake, was, he recognised also, of still more importance for being a relief to an overburdened spirit.

‘I began my emperorship,’ Henry went on, ‘much as a knight-errant rides out on an emprise. I had a high heart and a vision. I had hopes, too, of the newly elected Clement, a Frenchman, and resident at Avignon and not Rome. Our interests, I thought, would have the same ideal of necessity: the pacification and spiritualising of Italy, that breeding-ground of political dissension and ecclesiastical simony. I thought likewise that my dream would find support among the great vassals of the Empire, that when once the trumpet had been sounded against the open scandals of the world, there would be no hanging back but a response from sea to sea. For peace and peaceableness would be of benefit to all men, surely, and to all states. What, hitherto, had been lacking had been an Emperor who *saw* that, an Emperor willing to lend his utmost power to bring it to pass, an Emperor determined to be the scourge of all maleficence and injustice. So many of the Emperors have either

inherited wars that, for honour's sake, they have had to continue waging, or been themselves men of dissension and self-seeking, glorying because the dissensions of others gave their own wanton ambitions the opportunities to fatten ! But I had inherited no war ; I was entangled in no dynastic alliances ; I was seeking no favourable chance for pouncing upon a weak neighbour. I was an Emperor free of all the old excuses.'

He paused again, but the sigh that came pat, like an Amen to his speech, was the Prior's, not his.

' But what did I find ? ' continued Henry, speaking in a tone more resonant with inner feeling. ' That the alliance with Clement was only an alliance when I went *his* way and helped him in his feud with the Italian cardinalate ; that the imperial fiefdoms would only support me when I espoused this or that quarrel among them, and by supporting one I estranged another ; that my very position as Emperor was only respected in Europe according to my pawnship in Europe's game of political greed. I knew myself suddenly alone—so alone !—in my fight for peace and fraternity. They wanted me, all of them," he added vehemently, ' to be a catspaw. I see now that I was elected merely to fill a place, to be at their use and convenience. But, under God's favour, I *will* give Europe rest from its self-seeking overlords, whether kings or lesser princes, sovereign dukes or equally sovereign—and equally rapacious—republics ! To that end, unwillingly, father, I invaded your Italy, where internecine violence is most rampant and most clearly the sign and symbol of the world's miseries. I found all faction. Instead of any willingness towards peace and unity, they made even my invasion a new excuse for old self-seeking, either by opposing me or by flocking to my banners, according to their hopes. But not all vainly

have I striven towards pacification ; I was even crowned at Rome, which everyone took to be impossible. But always I find one persistent enemy, for my vision clashed with his, and continually he supplies both tinder and spark to the factions of Italy, hoping to weaken my authority and destroy my dream—the Pope ! And now Robert of Naples has joined in the same mischief. They are in a secret league against me, this Clement and this Robert. But I have put Robert to the ban of the Empire !’ he concluded fiercely and yet sorrowfully, and his hands clenched as he searched the Prior’s face for a sign either of sympathy or imperfect understanding, the one or the other. It was a glance full of haughtiness, yet it struck the Prior with a sense of almost intolerable pathos.

He put a hand on the Emperor’s arm, and said :

‘ Did you take your battle as like to be swift and easy ? It will last all your life—and you know it. The only courage is to be found in your soul and in its bond with God. Sire, fight on ! Bring your dream to the world ! The possession of power shall be justified in you !’

A look of mingled relief, pleasure and exaltation came into Henry’s face, but lasted only a moment.

‘ In me !—but in Clement ?’ he cried. ‘ All this runs counter to Clement—and Clement stirred up Robert of Naples to undo me. But I have put the ban on Robert, the ban ! It is my defiance of Clement. What can he do ? Nothing ! He must acquiesce. The ban is final, politically, in Christendom. This clash is the equivalent of a battle of the first magnitude—and Clement has no reserves to fling in against my ban. The day is mine !’

‘ How has the Holy Father taken it ?’ asked the Prior cautiously.

‘ My courier has not yet returned.’

For a little they did not speak again, and the cloisters, if possible, were even more full of sun than before.

VI.

It had been a companionable reverie, that silence between them ; but it was somewhat rudely broken.

Not often does a monastery cloister ring with monkish steps that might be those of a soldier, with the sandals slapping down on the flagstones with vehement tread instead of shuffling along in a seemly humility ; nor does a monk often enter the presence of his superior with cowl thrown back and features blazing with satirical and ruffling excitement. But so it was then.

‘What is the meaning of this ?’ demanded the Prior, rising in wrath and with a certain consternation. ‘Are you mad, or drunk, my son ?’

The monk well might have been either, for he stood before them, swaying on his feet and laughing immoderately.

The Emperor rose in his turn, and advanced towards the monk as though to take him by the shoulders and shake him out of his hysterics—which easily he could have done, being himself tall and burly, and the monk slight of build.

But there was no need to take physical measures, for the monk suddenly ceased laughing and stood, staring at the Emperor with a kind of wistful deprecation. Yet, even then, a satiric smoulder seemed lurking deep down in the gaze, and not as though an aftermath of his hysteria but as if it had lingered on through it from a previous set of thoughts.

‘Brother Johannes, return to your cell,’ ordered the Prior.

‘Are you happy . . . sire ?’ asked the monk in an intense whisper, addressing the Emperor without seeming to have

heard his superior's bidding. 'Are you happy under the weight of the Iron Crown, or unhappy? Whichever you are, thank *me* for it! It was I set it free for your wearing!'

The Emperor's eyes narrowed, and he looked at the Prior questioningly: surely a mad monk was not allowed such liberty?

'Return to your cell!' commanded the Prior more peremptorily, and his countenance was scarlet, his whole mien blazing with anger.

The monk became suddenly cowed, as if his previous vehemence and intensity had been the last leaping of flames in a spirit disciplined henceforward to the requisite ash. He turned humbly away, and with bent head was retracing his steps out of the cloisters when the Emperor's voice rang out with the abruptness of a military command:

'Stay!'

The monk's shoulders stiffened; he swung on his heel. Had his sandals spurs that he should instinctively click them together? Then he stood facing the Emperor and the Prior, with head at first lifted, only to be quickly bowed in a curious, almost mocking, humility.

Henry turned to the Prior.

'Who is this monk?' he demanded.

The Prior's face was puckered and troubled.

'This should not have happened,' he muttered. 'He is constantly sinning against discipline,' he added in a deprecatory aside. 'But this is unpardonable, sire.'

'Who is he?' again demanded Henry, and he had become very imperial in that moment.

'Sire . . . sire . . . ' stammered the old man.

'Tell me who he is!' cried Henry, his tone brusque and harsh, and his face pale.

The Prior still hesitating, it was the monk himself who supplied the answer :

‘I am Brother Johannes, called Parricida, and was once that John of Suabia who at the Bridge of Brugg plunged a dagger into your predecessor ! O my mother, why did you so hate my father’s brother that you could prick on your son to dye his hand in the vat of an uncle’s body ?’

With a scream of hysterical remorse the young monk ran pattering out of the cloisters. His screaming and laughing ceased in the distance. The sunlight, goldenly placid, remained : it might have been another actor, left now to hold the stage by the sheer splendour of its great silence.

‘This should never have happened,’ said the Prior, angrily distressed. ‘I shall not forgive myself for my lax rule.’

‘It is no matter,’ replied Henry calmly. ‘I knew he existed—somewhere. Why not here ? He has at least served to remind me that my time for comfort is spent. I must depart, father.’

‘Yes, my son,’ said the Prior, dully, sadly.

They had already turned, side by side, to make their way out under the colonnade when, unannounced, two figures were seen approaching.

‘Ah,’ said the Emperor, with a sigh of pleasure, ‘it is my good confessor—and with him Dante of the Alighieri. Welcome, father ; welcome, poet !’

The confessor made the sign of the cross in the air, while Dante sank on one knee and kissed the Emperor’s outstretched hand.

‘What news ?’ asked Henry, smiling. ‘I trust, father, you left your mother in better health.’

‘By the mercy of Saint Pantaleone, yes, sire,’ replied the confessor. ‘I was able, indeed, to leave her and spend a day

or two with my brother . . . at Avignon. I had not seen him these ten years. A blessed reunion.'

'Avignon?' cried Henry sharply. 'Saw you the Holy Father?'

'I—er—I took that opportunity, sire, for an audience,' answered Father Bernardino meekly, 'and, alas, bring from it a most dread news.'

'The which being?' Henry asked instantly, and Father Bernardino, as he answered him, thought that he had never seen the Emperor's squint more pronounced.

'He has excommunicated *you*!'

There was a long, deep silence. The Prior was aghast; the poet quivered with Apollonian anger; the confessor stood with folded hands, yet with watchful eyes. The Emperor himself seemed turned to stone.

'So he *had* reserves to fling in against my ban!' He muttered through tightened lips.

'O imperial Henry,' cried Dante, 'such a man and such a deed are fit only for miracle-players to enact in some make-believe of Hell! You, the first Emperor to put the visions of poets into action, to be bitten at heel by this white, tiara'd snake!'

'Hush, good friend,' said Henry, and he laid a hand briefly on the poet's arm, and then strode swiftly, and as though full of purpose, out of the cloisters, noting with a bitter grimace as he went how even the Prior edged a little aside at the passing by of an excommunicated man.

VII.

At the gate by which they had entered Pisa Father Bernardino and Dante Alighieri had already taken leave of their fellow-travellers and ridden on together at a pace which

clearly indicated no further wish for the company of a wandering quack and his doxy. Waleran, knowing within himself how little of a true mountebank he was, shrugged shoulders and laughed, but Lisa was affronted and burst into tears.

To comfort her, he took her to the shops first of all and bought her a necklace of Venetian beads.

‘But can you afford it, Valerano?’ she asked, open-mouthed when he put it about her neck.

‘That—and more!’ he answered, smiling at the limpid surprise in her quick pleasure. ‘And now to find us a lodging!’

During their search they came to a larger street where there was a crowd collected, and through the crowd, which was staring with all its eyes and shouting a welcome, came a small cavalcade of armed horsemen, clearing the way with the butts of their lances, and in the midst of them rode one on a coal-black horse with magnificent trappings.

‘It is the Emperor!’ cried Waleran, and made as though to bustle through to the front, leaving the ass in the care of Lisa.

‘Not so fast, fellow! Others want to see as well as you,’ said a craftsman in the leather apron of an armourer, and he stuck a huge elbow into Waleran’s ribs. The crowd was too thick for retaliation; too thick, also, for attracting the Emperor’s attention: nor, now that he thought of it more soberly, was it the best moment for approaching him with a secret message for his ear.

He returned to Lisa and the ass, and the search for lodgings was continued in quieter ways.

‘Was that the Emperor really, Waleran?’ asked Lisa as soon as they had extricated themselves from the press.

‘The Emperor Henry? Oh, yes. It was he. I know him,’ he boasted.

‘ You can’t deceive me like that ! ’ replied the girl, laughing. ‘ When a great prince is ill, he doesn’t run to a booth in a fair for his physic ! But did you see who were riding with him ? ’

‘ Yes,’ he answered. ‘ Our two companions of yesterday and this morning. But the priest is his confessor, as he told us. There is nothing in that. Who the other is—except for his name, a certain Alighieri—I cannot tell you. A strange fellow. He seemed as if he had come on a journey from Hell itself and was still scorched in the face ! ’

And Waleran laughed at his own imagination.

‘ Oh, no,’ said Lisa quickly. ‘ He had too sweet a smile for that. He might have ridden, when he smiled, straight out of the gates of Paradise.’

‘ We are both too fanciful, sweetheart,’ he answered. ‘ Smiling or not, he can have ridden from no further than Purgatory—and that is enough for any man’s strangeness ! ’

They found a lodging at last, and leaving Lisa to rest there after her ride, he went out to find stabling for the ass and to sell if he could—for now, having safely reached his journey’s end, he would no longer have a use for them—the few medical commodities which had served to support his character of quack. He looked about, therefore, for the shop of some apothecary.

At the first to be found he had no good reception.

‘ I do not buy drugs from wandering mountebanks,’ was the contemptuous answer. ‘ What you carry—dubious at best !—becomes sour from exposure. Go elsewhere ! ’

At the second he had the same rebuff, a little more violently expressed ; at the third, equally rebuffed, he was nevertheless given a helpful nudge as he left by an apprentice.

‘ Try old verminous Baldassario—over the bridge——’ was the whisper.

Over the bridge, and into what seemed a thieves' quarter, Waleran went, and after some delicate inquiry, not always welcomed, he was directed at last by a brothel-keeper to the recommended Baldassario, verminous in good truth, and very old. But the apothecary was not alone in his dark, dusty, eerie and repulsive shop. A man in a long cloak and with a hood over his face was counting some coins into his hand, evidently in payment for a tiny phial which Waleran, sharp-eyed, had seen carefully tucked away in a long sleeve as he entered.

The man muffled in the cloak turned abruptly on his heel to go ; then, in the doorway, Waleran and he exchanged an equally startled glance. The other half paused, as if to speak, then apparently thought better of it, and departed hurriedly. It was Father Bernardino.

'And what can I do for *thee*, young physician ?' asked Baldassario. He had a shaking head, and his voice was high-pitched and mocking.

Waleran quickly explained his business : that he was joining the wars for his better advancement and giving up his attendance at fairs and the like with a tray of quack remedies, and therefore had no further use for his stock-in-trade. They haggled a little, and, Waleran not caring a whit so long as he was rid of the encumbrance, the old man got the better of the bargain. Well pleased, he began to cackle with laughter.

Waleran, in the act of going, turned to ask where was the jest, and the old apothecary, placing a thick finger at the side of his long nose, answered :

'I had taken thee to have the same business as the other, but for all that I have got a good bargain thou art the less profitable, he, he !'

And then his cackle changed summarily into a wheeze.

‘And what *was* his business?’ asked Waleran curiously. The point, indeed, had teased him all through the bargaining.

‘Poison!’ wheezed Baldassario.

‘Poison!’ echoed Waleran in amaze.

‘For the rats in a monastery . . . so said he, and he is a priest, so I must believe or be heretic! Little he knew I had seen him before: but I amble about in many places. I saw more in him than thou didst, I warrant, for all thy young eyes.’

‘I doubt it,’ said Waleran with an involuntary superior air.

‘Hey?’ cried the old apothecary.

‘Was he, or was he not, the Emperor’s confessor?’ asked Waleran slyly.

Baldassario began to cackle again.

‘He, he, so you are not so secret as you believe, Bernardino de Montepulciano! Which, by the scourges of Rehoboam, be good to hear!’

‘Bernardino de Montepulciano . . .’ repeated Waleran, open-mouthed.

The Pulcian Mountain!

He dashed from the shop as if a legion of devils was at his heels.

VIII.

He hurried to the lodgings where he had left Lisa.

‘You must stay here, sweetheart,’ he said. ‘I have to follow the Emperor immediately.’

Replying only in brusque, inattentive monosyllables to her flood of expostulation and questioning, he undid, in the utmost haste, one of the panniers which he had taken from the ass, flung off his quackish garments, and quickly, with the

trained speed of the soldier, put on his full accoutrement as an esquire of the Archbishop-Elector of Treves. As she saw, her hands went to her mouth in consternation, her eyes opened in startled amaze, and her face, previously flushed, turned dead white.

‘Valerano . . .’ she whispered. ‘O Valerano . . .’

‘Do not question me now,’ he besought impatiently as he completed his dressing. ‘I have no time to explain anything. But I am not what I seemed.’

Perceiving her white face and almost terrified expression, he felt a quick gush of pitying tenderness, crossed over to her, took her in his arms and kissed her.

‘Do not fear, do not doubt,’ he said hastily. ‘I shall return. Till I do, here is my purse. But I have business of life and death.’

He kissed her again, swiftly buckled on his sword and his spurs, flung his cloak over his shoulders, and was gone.

His first check was to discover that the Emperor had already moved camp. He was no longer in Pisa. As to where he was, the rumours were as contradictory as two scholars on a disputed point in the Latinity of Ausonius. Then he had no horse; and on inquiry, it seemed that all the available horses in Pisa had been requisitioned for the Emperor’s baggage-train. Waleran was in despair. Frenziedly he thought of his ass, but knew that it was too tired to carry him further—or quickly!—that day. And now it would soon be dusk.

He chanced at length upon a pair of drunken stragglers.

‘Which way to the army?’ he asked breathlessly.

They pointed westward, leeringly, with wide sweeps of the arm.

Westward he went, easily outdistancing their lurching steps. He set himself to a marching pace, doggedly, deter-

minedly. Though night was coming on, he knew that there would presently be a moon.

He had marched on thus for some two or three hours when he heard the sound of a horse approaching at his back. He cried out as the rider drew abreast, and put a hand on the bridle-rein, drawing the horse to a standstill.

'Sir . . .' he began. 'Forgive my need . . .' And there he ceased, astonished beyond measure. It was the man in black who had known Father Bernardino. Waleran, at once suspicious, spoke more roughly: 'I must ask you for your horse.'

Dante leaned gauntly down from the saddle and stared into Waleran's face.

'Why, you, Sir Quack?' he said sharply, and in the light of the now rising moon the deeply etched shadows of his face, with the prominent nose and proud chin and jutting underlip, gave him an appearance both grim and sardonic when, in reality, he was only relieved that the encounter was no worse. 'A wandering salve-huckster turned night-hawk?' he went on with a laugh. 'It would need Ovid to sing such a metamorphosis, not I! My theme is the damned, not the reborn! But, good Valerano . . .'

Waleran cut him short.

'I must reach the Emperor in haste. I am one of his brother's esquires, and my mission is urgent. I must take your horse.'

'Are you seeking the Emperor by *this* road?' asked the poet in surprise. 'But he has gone south, towards Siena. I rode part of the way with him.'

'I was told he had marched west.'

'You were misinformed. He is making for Siena,' replied Dante, and his tone was convincing.

Waleran cursed with exasperation, then cried gruffly:

‘Come, your horse, sir ! If you are the Emperor’s friend, you will not deny my necessity. Or are you the friend of Father Bernardino de Montepulciano ?’

‘Of the Emperor,’ replied Dante instantly. ‘But,’ he added, with his brows drawn together, ‘you speak as if Father Bernardino . . .’

‘The Pope’s creature ! Let that suffice . . . Will you dismount, or must I compel you ?’

And Waleran laid his hand on his sword.

Dante dismounted.

‘Well, it is Can Grande’s horse, not mine,’ he said, grimly humorous, ‘and, for myself, I am not the first poet to find good rhymes under the moon ! Nor was I going farther,’ he added with a dry chuckle, ‘than to the monastery there,’ and he pointed towards a shadowy building looming in the distance among some cypresses. ‘Yet you must not think me a coward,’ he went on. ‘In my youth I fought at Campaldino . . .’

But the poet spoke to the air about him. Waleran had already leapt into the saddle and was spurring away.

Dante stood for a while in the same spot. He might have been a column of black marble in the moonlight. Yet it was marble that was not cold, but passionate ; and presently, with a gaze fixed on one of the lower stars, though not seeing it, he burst out into fierce, exalted speech :

‘O Florence, Florence, do you trust in your defence because that you are girdled in by a contemptible rampart ? What shall it avail you to have girt you with walls and to have fortified yourself with battlements, when, terrible in gold, the eagle shall swoop down upon you, which, soaring now above the Pyrenees, now above Caucasus, now above Atlas, borne up by the breath of Heaven’s soldiery, gazed down of old in its flight over the vast expanse of Ocean ?

O imperial eagle ! O mighty Henry ! Exile is at last endurable with this hope of universal justice swooping down upon the villainy of the Earth ! O blessed time ! O heavenly beneficence, that hast sent such a man into this troubled and insane world ! O fraternity ! O peace !'

IX.

Henry had pitched camp at Buonconvento. Restless in the heat of his tent—it was the twenty-fourth day of August—he had climbed the bell-tower of the nearest church in the hope of a little air.

A deeply devout man, the excommunication inwardly troubled him. For all that the Pope was his enemy and, as a man, not sufficiently spiritual for his office, he was yet the Pope, and Henry, as a good son of the Church, did not make the mistake of belittling heavenly powers because of the insufficiency of earthly instruments. He believed in the efficacy of Clement's excommunication of him, that divorce from the Christian community and the comfort of the Mass.

He looked about him at the outspread beauty of the landscape. Bathed in the bright Italian sun, it had the richness of a natural tapestry beyond the petty looms of mortals to imitate. Everything seemed at peace, yet he knew only too well how the first mutters of war were already echoing in to him from the horizon to north, south, east and to west. And all because he had bidden men be politically fraternal—but against their miserable and ephemeral selfishnesses.

The immediate stretch of country was dotted with the activity of his camp ; elsewhere, far away in every direction, reigned beauty, without motion in itself, since there was no wind to stir even the tops of the trees, and without intrusion

into its calm, since there was neither marching of troops nor flight of the inhabitants. There was certainly peace under the shadow of his banners.

He heard steps mounting within the tower ; but, deep in his own thoughts, did not even turn his head when the newcomer emerged behind him, and came and stood at his side. By the dry cough which for some moments he had heard at intervals he knew who it was : his confessor.

After a space of curious, enigmatic silence, Henry turned haggard eyes upon the priest.

‘How long, think you, will it continue over me,’ he asked in a hollow voice, ‘ . . . this . . . this exile from the Kingdom of Christ ? ’

‘Until your quarrel, sire, as I take it, is composed with the Holy Father,’ replied the priest firmly, almost briskly, as if he had been long prepared to answer such a question and was glad at last to be free of the responsibility of it.

‘How can it be composed,’ muttered the Emperor, ‘unless the one of us gives way ? He has gone too far to weaken unless *I* weaken ; and for me to weaken were for my soul to deny its mission ! ’

‘Expediency, sire,’ murmured Father Bernardino de Montepulciano, ‘has sometimes so great a wisdom that it can outreach enthusiasm in the end. Saint Paul has a good word concerning this, the which is . . . ’

‘I will not temporise,’ cried Henry sharply, striking the stone coping in front of him with his hand. ‘I am unwilling to believe that it is only I among history’s princes who has had so good a dream, but I alone of them will be found no temporiser with the forces of self-seeking because, in the Devil’s name, it is expedient ! That way has ever come the failure of the world’s ideals, and if mine are to fail, it shall not be by taking a half-measure.’

‘That is sure,’ said the confessor quietly.

‘I thank you, father,’ replied Henry. ‘But I have found you always a man to bring peace to me.’

‘The peace everlasting,’ murmured Father Bernardino in a voice that seemed merely part and parcel of his profession, nothing more.

‘It is all so evil, so unbelievably against the purposes of life itself, this warring and national enmity,’ Henry went on.

‘Nature is full of strife,’ replied the confessor, ‘and men are but a part of Nature. Would you ask the wolf to have the manners of the dog?’

‘I would certainly not ask the dog to have the manners of the wolf!’ riposted Henry, almost angrily, and his squint became from that moment more and more noticeable. ‘Man is not meant,’ he continued, ‘to add to the strife of Nature, but to dominate it and bring it under the power of beauty. That is his function in this life—as it is mine to open the path for future generations to enter more easily into that true way.’

He had spoken exaltedly, and broke from his mood with a sudden self-consciousness, and coughed, and turned again to the contemplation of the landscape.

Far away, on the dusty, winding road from Pisa—so far away as to be only a moving black speck—came a horseman, galloping.

‘Take off the ban from the King of Naples,’ whispered Father Bernardino. ‘The Holy Father will give it a paternal recognition, and hand in hand . . .’

‘There can be no hand in hand with Clement along *my* road,’ cried Henry sadly. ‘He has shown it only too plainly. Be his catspaw—be *their* catspaw, as they one and all expected—no, no! The matter has gone too far for such a treason on my part. I will never be found traitor to my ideal, my

dream. I will at least leave to my successor an opened gate into that League of the Peoples which alone can be the bulwark against temporal misery and the ambitions of princes and the intoxication of power. The world will come to know it, or I have no vision and am no servant of God.'

'Then you will *not* lift the ban off Robert of Naples?' asked the confessor softly.

'No,' answered the Emperor. 'Never! I will die first! He is a son of war and dissension. He must be made peaceable.'

'Sire,' Father Bernardino murmured after a slight pause, 'this touches me. I will dare the wrath of the Holy Father. If you will come down into the church below, I will give thee, my son, that sacrament for which thou cravest. Come . . .'

'Father . . . good father . . .' cried Henry, and his face was suddenly lit as by an ecstasy. 'Oh, I have been desperate, but you bring me the one, unparalleled comfort! Let us go down at once!'

With the last glance which he gave to the shimmering landscape he saw a party of men-at-arms, with a man, evidently a marauder whom they had caught, bound in their midst, making for the nearest tall tree. Henry's first act on descending was to despatch an esquire with a command for the poor wretch's release.

'It is not *his* fault,' he muttered, 'but that of the times—and the times, by God's favour, we are about to amend!'

In the church were a number of the Emperor's knights and attendants, either at the doors in low-toned speech or paying their devotions, for he surrounded himself only with men of a certain piety. In a few, quick, excited words he explained the occasion, breaking off to praise with much warmth the spiritual courage of Father Bernardino in disregarding the fiat of excommunication.

Then he went swiftly to the altar, and knelt in prayer.

The confessor, who had retired into the sacristy, came out presently in his vestments, followed by the priest of the church to act as his assistant. Between them they bore the sacred vessels necessary. They made their passage through a small, kneeling congregation, even the gossippers at the doors having entered and joined devoutly with their fellows within.

But as Father Bernardino passed through, he turned and spoke to the village priest at his heels in a voice audible to all around :

‘I am concerned for him. His health is not what it should be. The strain upon him . . . and he has bravely hidden the fever that he has . . . but still . . .’

And they passed on to the altar.

The brief service began. The bread was consecrated and administered ; the wine was consecrated, a priestly sleeve passing over the cup, then it, too, was administered.

The Emperor drank.

Suddenly he swayed where he knelt, gasping, catching at his throat, coughing, retching ; then, in an effort to rise to his feet, he fell back with a desperate cry, contortedly, and was dead.

X.

Waleran had ridden all through the hot, marvellous summer night, and it was a lathered horse which he reined in at the church door, only to see the body of the Emperor being reverently borne out by two of his esquires. They would carry it into the brilliantly bannered, imperial tent in the middle of the camp, there to lie in state until further order should be known.

Aghast, cursing himself and his mischances, he made question of one whom he recognised among the Emperor's attendants, a native of Brabant as he was himself. A flurry of awed, breathless sentences related everything—but he knew, in truth, more than was told him, more than he would dare ever tell. For who would believe the accusation of a man of his insignificance, lately, too, in disguise and all too probably, therefore, a spy, against so respected a personage as the Emperor's own confessor, a learned and pious priest, one, moreover, in favour, as was well known, with the Holy Father?

But, raging inwardly, he was beside himself, and when the Brabançon's hurried story broke off at the appearance in the church porch of Father Bernardino himself and one of the Emperor's chief knights he strode forward and confronted the confessor, eye to eye.

'Who is this man?' asked the knight, curiously.

It was only the Archbishop-Elector's badge on his attire, Waleran knew, which saved him from Father Bernardino's denunciation.

'You stabbed the wrong messenger!' he blurted out, indifferent as to who heard, and, as the priest's eyes narrowed, he bitterly added: 'And the true messenger has come too late! God help the world!'

He swung on his heel and mounted his horse. Would the confessor let him go? He urged the tired beast to a walking pace, no more. The confessor made no sign, the knight followed his going with an incomprehension which found utterance in a single word:

'Mad!'

'Poor wretch!' commented Father Bernardino, placidly and paternally.

ON PARTING WITH AN OLD PIANO.

*Fifty years of my life
 Have just gone out of the house :
 And I had not reckoned with the pang,
 The long, simultaneous procession of memories.*

*Those first early days,
 When I wrestled with the meaning of crotchets,
 Quavers, semi-quavers
 And (oh, enchantment even then of a mere word !)
 Demi-semi-quavers.
 Then the triumph of exercise-book 'pieces' :
 'Blue Bells of Scotland,' 'Keel Row,' 'Mistletoe Bough.'
 After that, school and real 'pieces' ;
 Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven :
 And the knowledge of being considered 'good at music'
 (Although that was always uncomfortably ousted
 By the far deeper knowledge that it was not 'goodness' at all,
 But only a disgusting slickness.)
 Then finishing school,
 Giddy heights of popularity,
 Brilliance, at concerts,
 Of soaring voice as well as of twinkling fingers.
 After that, gradual descent year by year
 Into scamped practice, mediocrity of performance,
 Dulling of bird notes :
 And at last, under increasing pressure of existence,
 Neglect and (except on the part of the piano-tuner)
 Silence.*

*So now,
Needing the piano's room more than its company,
I have made a complacent virtue of necessity
And given it to an old friend—
A friend who instantly knew and understood,
Who received the fifty years of my life
And spared a sigh, a smile, a tear over them,
Before trying her new piano.*

V. H. FRIEDLAENDER

REMEMBERING AN ENGLISH GRANDFATHER.

I.

*The hedgerows burned with colouring as old
As English autumn, and as manifold—
Village and spinney, down and common lay
At one with nature's peacefulness—that day
You bartered Berkshire for uncertainty
Of young Virginia, far beyond the sea.*

II.

*Below the lichened belfry, where I stand,
Three hundred years have scarcely touched the land
That held your heart's devotion till you died,
A land your memory always glorified.
As then, the line of elms where April rook
Challenged the tenantry of squirrel; the brook
Spanned by a bridge as ancient as this tower,
Blend with the landscape, as a leaf with flower.*

*The village, thatched of roof; the fields, hedge-fenced,
Merge also, into beauty keenly sensed,
A mystic, man-carved loveliness. These bells
Reverberate in spring to citadels
Of hare and pheasant; coverts where the fox
Finds refuge for his earth among brown rocks
And bracken; or the wheatear, flying lowly,
Rivals the blackbird in her song. Now slowly,
A flock and shepherd wind across the hill;
The afternoon grows drowsier, and still.*

III.

*O grandsire, mingled with the Jamestown earth,
Was any conquest or dominion worth
The cost? Or did the destiny that made
You leave this England, keep you unafraid
The while you faced a wilderness and hewed
From it a commonwealth? With fortitude
You served Virginia loyally and rest,
'By hope of a joyful resurrection,' blessed;
Yet in your dreaming, if the dead desire,
Do you not yearn for your ancestral shire?*

LOUISE CRENSHAW RAY.

Alabama, U.S.A.

MAGIC AND MEDICINE IN MEXICO.

BY RODNEY GALLOP.

A FAMILIAR feature in the market of every village of Indian Mexico is the *curandero* or herb-doctor, who crouches over a straw mat on which in neat little heaps are spread out a variety of ill-assorted objects, ranging from desiccated flowers, leaves and roots to woodpeckers' heads and armadillo shells. This curious array is the outward sign of an extensive practice of folk-medicine, the great bulk of which goes back to pre-Conquest days. Faith in the *curandero* is such that people will often prefer him to the doctor, even where one is available, and there are many more or less well-authenticated stories of his success where medical science has failed.

A striking and rather touching example of this faith reached my ears when King George V lay dying. An old British resident in Mexico City was visited by two Indians who came independently to offer their advice. The first said that a deer should be killed and the warm blood given to the King to drink. The second begged him to send to London by air mail a remedy distilled from seven herbs gathered at the new moon, of which he would not disclose the names.

Folk medicine in Mexico as in most countries is a fascinating blend of superstition and of genuine empirical medicinal lore. Since, moreover, the Indian peasantry have inherited it from the relatively sophisticated civilisations

which preceded the Conquest, the purely superstitious element is present in a lesser degree than in many European countries, such as Portugal.¹

The Spanish Conquistadores were deeply impressed with this lore. Sahagún, Torquemada and other early chroniclers describe the properties of many curative herbs, and in the College of Santa Cruz for the Sons of Indian Gentlemen established in Mexico City by Franciscan Friars within twenty years of the Conquest, the curriculum included the study of Aztec medicine. Sahagún, in particular, mentions certain medicinal stones, in addition to herbs, including one which restores those who, in his words, 'have received a shock from a flash of lightning' or which, mixed with another stone, is a cure for heart disease. The latter stone was supposed, like the thunderbolt, to fall from the clouds during mountain storms and to remain under the earth, gradually growing larger and larger. The sign of its presence is a solitary tuft of *zacate* grass.

The belief in the curative virtues of stones is rare in Mexico to-day, but in the Otomi village of San Bartolo Otolotepec my wife, who made a hobby of gathering Indian medical lore, saw a herb-woman selling what she called *corazón de piedra*, heart of stone, that is to say fragments from the centre of a broken stone, for heart trouble. At Iguala another ordinary-looking stone was on sale for application, together with iron pyrites, to scorpion stings.

Sahagún also takes responsibility for the strange statement that the bones of giants found under the earth, ground up and drunk with chocolate, are a remedy for internal hæmorrhage. These can scarcely be other than the bones of large, prehistoric animals such as the mammoth skeleton which

¹ See *Portugal: A Book of Folk Ways*, by Rodney Gallop, pp. 61 seq.

was dug up some years ago near Peñon and is now in the Natural History Museum in Mexico City.

In 1570 Phillip II of Spain ordered his private physician Francisco Hernández to write the Natural History of New Spain. For this purpose he gave him the high-sounding title of Proto-Médico de las Indias and sent him to Mexico where for five years he travelled about, risking his life, undermining his health and suffering much from lack of support, both financial and moral. By 1577 he had completed his monumental work in sixteen manuscript in-folio tomes, with which he returned to Spain. To superintend the printing of his work he gave up a similar commission in Peru and other parts of the Indies, but to his great grief his manuscript was not printed but stowed away in the Library of the Escorial where in 1671 all but a few leaves were destroyed by fire. Fortunately, a Neapolitan doctor by the name of Recchi had made a summary in Latin of the book, of which a copy fell into the hands of one Francisco Ximénez, a Dominican monk who worked as a physician in the Hospital of Oaxtepec, founded by Cortes within a mile or so of what had been Montezuma's garden of medicinal herbs. Ximénez studied the manuscript, tried the remedies on his patients and finally translated it into Spanish with his own notes, in which form it was published in Mexico in 1615, with the title *Cuatro Libros de la Naturaleza*. This book, though no doubt only a shadow of the original work, is of the greatest interest.

The Hospital of Oaxtepec produced another fervent Spanish student of Aztec medicinal lore, the 'Servant of God,' Gregorio López, whose *Tesoro de Medicinas* was published in 1674. Space precludes the mention of more than one or two of the more curious of his prescriptions. For asthma he recommends the lung of a fox powdered in wine or

lizards toasted with their heads and tails cut off; for eye troubles the ashes of a snail mixed with honey; and for broken ribs, goats' dung in wine applied to the injured part. As a cure for alcoholism his suggestions are powdered pumice stone, eels, horse's sweat, the blood of bedbugs or burnt and powdered swallows, all to be dissolved in wine and taken internally.

It is obvious that such cures are not entirely innocent of superstitious notions, and sympathetic magic plays its part in many of them, as in cures of the 'hair-of-the-dog-that-bit-you' type. Gregorio López, for instance, advises his patients not to use the hair but to drink the blood of the dog which bit them, and to apply to a scorpion sting the dead body of the scorpion. We have even heard at Tepoztlán at the present time of the offending scorpion being immediately eaten alive with this same object. An even more curious case reached our ears from Guatemala, between which and Mexico the Maya Indians form a connecting link. One of two quarrelling women bit the other's arm which swelled up but was cured by extracting the tooth of the biter and tying it to the place.

Not long ago we were fortunate enough to visit an Otomi witch-doctor in his mountain home of San Pablito in the Sierra de Puebla where not more than three or four Indians speak the Spanish tongue. This village has a great reputation in all the surrounding country for magic, both black and white. In particular it has preserved the pre-Conquest manufacture of bark-paper which is used for ceremonial purposes ~~ply~~. From it our friend the *brujo* was cutting little human figures about six inches long. These figures are used not only in all sorts of pagan agricultural fertility rites but also for folk medicines. Illness is conceived as an evil spirit which has entered into the body of the sufferer. The

witch-doctor coaxes it out with incantations into a figure of the dark-coloured paper used for black magic, which he immediately burns and replaces with another made of the light-coloured paper used for white magic. This completes the cure.

Faith in the virtues of sympathetic magic is also responsible for the strange complex of beliefs and practices known as *nagualism* which presupposes an intimate connection between every human being and a certain animal. If that animal suffers, so the man will suffer by an invisible current of sympathetic magic. Round Misantla the Totonacs determine a new-born child's *nagual* by strewing the ground round the cottage with ashes in the evening. Next morning the ashes are examined for animal-tracks, those nearest the child's resting-place being those of his *nagual*. When a person is ill the Totonacs are certain that his spirit is caught in the mountains and is about to be reincarnated in some animal. They hunt for this animal and the first to find it, be it squirrel, badger or armadillo, catches it alive and tends it carefully until the sick person recovers.

Among the Popolac Indians on the borders of Puebla and Oaxaca it is the witch-doctor himself who sets out in search of that animal which he considers has carried off some part of his patient's soul. When he catches it he hands it over to the patient and then drums on some hollow object, shouting and bellowing his adjurations to the soul to return, in the chorus of which all those present join.

Auto-suggestion may account for cures effected even by such unscientific means as these, as they do no doubt for many of the miraculous cures attributed to local cults of Christ, the Virgin and the Saints, or to *soi-disant* 'illuminated' persons like the extraordinary figure known as *El Niño Fidencio* who ten years ago attracted people of all classes

from all over Mexico to his remote village in the North.

On one occasion we accompanied the huge stream of Indian pilgrims who proceed on the first Friday in Lent to the greatly venerated shrine of Chalma in the south-west of the State of Mexico. On our return, an old woman who was trudging along beside us told us that she had suffered agonies of toothache which nothing would alleviate. She had spent as much as three pesos at the dentist's, but all in vain. Then she had gone in pilgrimage to Chalma where she had bought one of the small fragments of earth from the sacred cave which are sold to the pilgrims. This she had applied to her tooth which was miraculously cured. 'Did the pain never return?' we asked. 'No,' she replied, 'you see, as soon as I put the earth on it the tooth fell out.'

It is unjust, if a little tempting, to lay undue emphasis on the cures in which ignorance and credulity combine to produce picturesque results. Most folk-medicine in Mexico, as already mentioned, is on a higher level, and there are many instances in which it has forestalled modern scientific discoveries. In applying the kidneys of cattle or toad-skins to staunch bleeding wounds the Indians have only been anticipating by a few centuries the discovery of adrenalin. Sea-urchin and other shells and fragments of dried crab sold in the market at Patzcuaro to be powdered and drunk in wine for the blood derive their virtue from the small quantities of iodine which they contain. Through this or some other property a medicine derived from mother of pearl is of undoubted efficacy in removing scars, including even smallpox pits. The curative compounds found in many medicinal herbs are often difficult to isolate, but science usually confirms their virtues when this can be done, as for instance in the *flor de manita*, better known as digitalis.

Where the conception of disease is false, however, it is useless to expect sound notions of curing it. Some of the Mayas, for instance, conceive measles as a little child, and put toys and food outside their doors so that he may stop and play with them and thus be deterred from entering the house. They attempt to combat smallpox by placing gourds full of ground maize on the eaves of their huts with the idea that the disease will partake of it and depart satisfied. Should one of them contract it, however, he will actually take scabs from himself and prick them into other members of the household, thus in effect spreading the disease. Frederick Starr, who reports this practice, is puzzled as to its motive, but it seems clearly to be inspired by the ancient notion that one can be rid of a disease by transferring it to another person or object.

A Mexican friend was told by an Otomi Indian, when suffering from an inflamed eye, that he must rub it with a sprig of rue or of the pepper-tree, which he must then throw backwards over his shoulder without looking at it. If he looked backwards the affection would follow him. Here the affection is clearly conceived as being transferred to the sprig.

When we first bought guinea-pigs for our children in Mexico City, our washerwoman showed interest and approval. We had of course bought them to keep illness away from the house she said. This new use for guinea-pigs was puzzling, and we explained that they were intended only as pets. She maintained, however, that where guinea-pigs were kept people did not fall ill. This belief puzzled us until we learned that in Peru, if not in Mexico, guinea-pigs play a considerable part in folk-medicine. Thus, in the High Andes, if an Indian feels pain the spot is rubbed with a live guinea-pig with the idea that the evil shall pass

into the animal. The latter is then skinned and examined by the witch-doctor, and the patient's complaint is diagnosed from the condition of its muscles and heart.

Apart from the malign effects attributed to witchcraft, the most varied symptoms tend to be grouped under a few headings such as *inflamación* (stomach trouble), *el aire* ('the air,' generally a chill), *el dolor* ('the pain'), *ansias* (worry), *empache* (distension or swelling) and that distressingly common complaint the *derrame de bilis* or 'flow of bile' brought on by anger or agitation. For this last we have noted an immense range of remedies, only two of which can be recorded here. Out in the country we once met an Indian carrying the white roots of the *contrahierba* plant strung like a chain of great white beads bandoleerwise round his shoulders. These he was taking to sell in the market as a sovereign cure for the *bilis*. Another curious remedy is to drink on an empty stomach a tea made from the *cempoalxochitl*, Aztec flower of the dead, holding a copper coin in it.

The vast majority of remedies, of course, are herbal, although a catalogue of them with their properties, real or, supposed, could only be wearisome. One plant may be used for many different cures. For instance, the flowering shrub called *cabellito de angel* or angel's hair, from the silky red strands of its flower, was known to the Aztecs as a cure for eye troubles, even including cataract. Within the last half century it was looked upon by members of the medical profession as a remedy for malaria, but we have more often heard it recommended as a heart stimulant, for which purpose it is sold in Malinalco to the pilgrims nearing Chalma, who may well require it after their exhausting journeys on foot up hill and down dale for several days.

To many uses, both good and bad, are put the group of

plants known collectively as *toloache* and all containing the active principle of belladonna. Among them is the beautiful trumpet-flower of the scented *floripundio*. Taken in large doses *toloache* is, of course, not only a potent drug but a deadly poison, and certain parts of it, chiefly the seeds, affect the nervous system and may cause a form of madness. In Northern Mexico the Indians of the Sierra Madre produce a kind of intoxication by chewing the leaves or making an infusion of them and mixing them with *mescal* spirit. The Yaqui women sometimes take the cooked leaves to diminish the pains of childbirth. The leaves, prepared with those of *salvia* and *digitalis*, are also made into anti-asthmatic cigarettes, while the seeds mixed with alcohol make a good friction for rheumatic pains.

Many even stranger objects figure in the Mexican pharmacopœia. The *curandero's* store often offers fragments of armadillo shell which are ground up and given to children with the whooping-cough. At Xoxocotla we saw a little girl suffering from this complaint with an armadillo's head hung round her neck. Francisco Jiménez mentions that the penultimate bone in the armadillo's tail ground up with oil and made into pills is a good remedy for deafness. In his own case, however, the remedy was not efficacious, which he ascribed to the fact that his deafness came from a 'cold' and not a 'hot' cause. The terms 'hot' and 'cold' have curious applications in this connection. Certain fruits, such as melon, mango and guava are regarded as 'hot,' and others such as paw-paw, orange and water-melon as 'cold', possibly depending on whether they are heating or cooling to the blood.

In the market at Oaxaca we found tortoiseshell being sold as a cure for ulcers on the fingers, and a green wood-pecker together with sea-urchin spines and seaweed for

heart trouble and the ever-present *el aire*. At El Arenal near Actopan in Otomi country the specific for this last complaint was *comajén*, earth honeycombed by some insect and gathered at the foot of the near-by hills.

Folk-medicine affects its strangest forms in its attempts to cure what is virtually incurable. There are several so-called remedies for rabies, for instance, including the juice of the maguey aloe and the flesh of the zopilote buzzard. The strangest is one of which we heard from a man who was riding through the hot country of Vera Cruz. In a tiny hamlet he found a group of muleteers, one of whom was in an advanced stage of hydrophobia. He had been tied to a tree by his companions and had become so violent that no one could approach him. On his return journey a few days later our informant met the same group and was surprised to see the victim sitting with the other muleteers, pale and haggard, but eating and behaving quite naturally. It appeared that while tied to the tree he had been stung by seven scorpions and as a result the evil had gone out of him. The scorpions, it was, had died.

One evening we were walking up the mountain trail behind Taxco when we overheard a curious conversation between an elderly man and a middle-aged woman trudging their way home from market. The woman was complaining of her incurable ill-health and the man was trying to persuade her to consult the Health Delegate at Taxco. For thirty-nine years, he said, he had suffered from an illness which from his description sounded like the after-effects of rheumatic fever. He had always regarded it as *el aire*, for on that day in his youth when he had been stricken down he had been over-heated and he had thought that the chill air had entered into his blood. He had not been superstitious, he said, like those Indians who conceived *el*

aire as a malignant being and tried to placate it with offerings of food left in caves and at the foot of high cliffs. But he had known no better than to believe that *el aire* could be transferred from father to child and that if the children left home they took it away from their parents with them. Yet all those who claimed to have knowledge of cures had been unable to help him. Then, a year or two ago, he had approached the Health Delegate. The latter had cleared up his misconceptions and had given him injections at their bare cost which had made him well again.

The incident is typical of what is happening all over Mexico. Gradually, and in the face of countless obstacles, the light of pure science is conquering superstition, ignorance and dim or partial knowledge. Eventually, be the time short or long, this traditional lore will be superseded by rational medicine to the great benefit of the peasant community. Yet this traditional lore has a contribution to make to medical science, if it is studied before it is too late by those with the requisite botanical and medical knowledge. Countless medicinal herbs have yet to yield to the analyst the organic substances from which they derive their efficacy, and once isolated these substances may yield remedies still unknown to civilisation.

SEAL ISLAND.

BY LAWRENCE G. GREEN.

FOR years I had sailed past Seal Island without ever setting foot on the rocky, guano-whitened slopes. 'It is surrounded by sunken rocks on which the sea usually breaks,' warns the *Africa Pilot*; but I had often steered my small sloop close enough to watch the sun-bathing colony of seals littering the northern point.

At last I was invited to explore this little-known islet, a place few people, apart from naval seamen, fishermen and the guano gangs, have ever seen save as a white streak etched against the blue surface of False Bay. Though the island lies within sight of South Africa's naval base at Simonstown, it is inaccessible except in the finest weather, and therefore remote.

The contract for gathering the guano harvest is held by Miss Sophia Fernandez of Kalk Bay. Seal Island is one of many little bird isles owned by the Union Government. Nearly all the others are worked by the Guano Islands Department; but it is more convenient to allow this lone rock to be cleared by private contract. Old Pedro Fernandez held the contract for many years. When he died five years ago, his daughter, Sophia, already experienced in the queer trade, took over the management. It is a masculine enterprise, yet she handles every detail with real knowledge.

Her brothers, of course, carry out the difficult routine of landing the expedition on Seal Island every summer, supervising the work on shore, keeping the men supplied with

food and water, and loading the sacks of guano. But Miss Fernandez visits the island, purchases the stores, controls the whole business side of the affair. She was there on the day of my visit, fishing with the men of the motor-cutter *Simon*, checking equipment, satisfying herself that nothing had been forgotten. 'Just think what would happen if the men on the island found I had not packed the matches!' she pointed out.

There are now four Fernandez brothers, and I met two of them on the day when I accompanied the family expedition to the island. Thomas, the eldest, is skipper of the *Simon*, a splendid seaman and an expert in handling boats along the dangerous shores of Seal Island. A younger brother, Cyril, takes charge of the party of seven men on the island, becoming a willing exile for a month every year. The others, Sydney and Gabriel, are skippers of Fernandez family boats on the coast. Three more brothers were lost on one disastrous day in 1922, when the fishing boat *Columbia* capsized in heavy weather in False Bay. A boat named in memory of them, the *Three Brothers*, was wrecked on Seal Island some years afterwards.

Several of the Fernandez boats carry a row of black-painted ports like old-time men-o'-war. The *Simon* is the fastest cutter on False Bay, and she can load 15 tons of guano. When she is not plying between Kalk Bay and Seal Island she steers as far north as Luderitzbucht for the crawfishing, or loiters off Cape Point after snoek.

The sea is the Fernandez family tradition. About a century ago a number of sailormen, including the first Fernandez, deserted from a Spanish ship and settled at the Cape. Their descendants still form the backbone of the Kalk Bay fishing fleet. Though the Spanish language is no longer spoken among them they are still Roman Catholics, and the Spanish type of countenance may be clearly traced.

You must visualise Seal Island to understand the hardships and difficulties of the Fernandez enterprise. It lies about seven miles from Kalk Bay harbour—just a rock, as I have said, without one patch of sandy beach. The area is about one acre, and the highest point about 50 feet above the surf. It is waterless, completely barren. Only the seals, the duikers, penguins and pelicans are really at home there; though the labourers who sign on for the work year after year are happy to find themselves on the desolate rock again, with regular meals for a month assured. As I stood on Seal Island in the evening I thought of the strong contrast between this primitive adventure and the lighted pleasure resorts of the False Bay coast only a few miles away.

It was all summed up, accurately enough, on my official permit: 'The Government accepts no responsibility whatever for any accident which may happen to, or any loss which may be incurred by, the holder of this permit either in landing or on embarkation from the island.'

The *Simon* lay rolling at anchor off the landing-place an hour after leaving harbour. Skipper Thomas Fernandez had brought her close in, for the day was as calm as could be expected. Men and stores were transferred to an open boat in tow, and cautiously we approached the sea-swept rock which gives doubtful access to the safety of the island.

'It is just a matter of watching the sea and counting the waves,' young Cyril Fernandez told me. 'One man will jump on shore with a line and make it fast to a ring-bolt in the rock. We have a stern-line fast to the cutter. Wait for slack water, then take your chance. Now!'

I jumped, and clambered on to Seal Island with wet feet. And I imagined the conditions on a day of heavy weather. Such a day as that on which Cyril Fernandez found himself sinking in a smashed boat, and was flung on to the island

by a great wave with hardly a scratch. Or another day, when another boat was lost, and he swam for his life surrounded by seals. 'They played with me like kittens with a ball of wool,' he recalled. 'I thought I was finished, but not one seal bit me.'

I watched the precious fresh water floated ashore in barrels, hauled up and rolled to the hut, emptied into iron drums. Then came the stores, passed from hand to hand. No picnic party this, but the grim essentials of life on a rock—coal for the 'galley,' wood and candles, flour, rice, fish oil, sacks of onions and potatoes, salt and salt fish, tinned meat, tea, coffee and paraffin stoves, a drum of oil, fish-hooks and lines, simple medicines, the tobacco rations. One or two packages may be dropped in the sea, but never the tobacco. No alcohol is allowed on the island.

'Here is another important item—insect powder,' Miss Fernandez showed me. 'The birds have been occupying the stone hut where the men will live, and they are not good tenants. To-night the men will have to sleep under canvas. Then they will clear out the hut, whitewash it, and use the insect powder. Otherwise Seal Island is a most healthy place.'

Hard work, I think, keeps the exiles healthy. They started soon after landing, a line of men on their knees with scrapers, brooms and shovels, literally scratching the valuable guano from this acre of rock. Miss Fernandez receives payment from the Government for each ton of guano delivered. The men are paid by results; they work cheerfully by daylight and with lamps in the dark to clear the rock so that each man may return with about £7 saved. One grey-headed labourer, John McLaghlan, has not missed a season for twenty years. Seal Island, comfortless though it may seem, gives them greater security than they can find on the

mainland. I saw a labourer with one arm in the gang. 'The best worker of the lot,' Cyril Fernandez told me.

Wind and rain are the enemies of the men on Seal Island. A high wind blows the loose, powdery guano away. Rain damages the guano in sacks if left uncovered, and washes the untouched deposits into the sea.

The occupation of the island must be carefully timed with an eye on the weather. But the habits of the birds are the most important factor. Most of the guano is left by the migrating 'trek duikers'—those unlovely black hordes of cormorants you see flying like squadrons of bombers, in marvellous formation, low over the sea. Shy birds on shore, they nest on the outer rocks and lay their long, chalky eggs. They hasten screeching from the invader. Two or three months after the capricious duikers have arrived, the clearing season on Seal Island begins.

The lordly penguins are there at all times, seizing the best positions, scorning the exposed places where the duikers breed. Nevertheless, the penguins of Seal Island are poorly housed in comparison with the inhabitants of other penguin resorts. A penguin likes to hollow out a burrow with tireless feet and live underground. On the hard granite of Seal Island this is impossible, so the penguins cower and cringe behind rocks, in crevices, beneath boulders. If you walk among them they hide their heads ludicrously, or huddle their chicks together and hiss defiance. Spend an afternoon with the penguins and you realise why a great Antarctic explorer called them 'the comedians of the South.'

Dozens of pelicans use Seal Island as their breeding ground. They were away fishing in the vleis of the Cape Flats when I called. Cyril Fernandez has studied this interesting group closely. 'They destroy the young duikers and penguins and eat the eggs,' he said. 'These pelicans seem to prefer

fresh-water fish, but bring all sorts of queer food over here from the mainland. If you find a dead snake, a rat or a chicken you may be sure it has been dropped by a pelican.'

The sacred ibis, too, prowls among the young birds, and fully deserves its criminal reputation. This sinister bird flies all the way from Egypt to plunge its long beak into tasty fledglings.

False Bay is the greatest line-fishing area in South African waters. One school of thought believes the bird sanctuary on Seal Island should be destroyed to improve the fishing. It is a difficult problem, and one which applies to the whole coastline. Which are worth more to the country—the guano-producing birds or the fish? Naturalists have calculated that the birds destroy twenty thousand tons of fish a day. The yield of guano from all the islands in a good year is about ten thousand tons. Those interested in the fishing industry would drive the birds away from the roosts they have occupied for centuries, and turn the fish into fish-meal—a food for cattle and poultry. The controversy fills the correspondence columns of the newspapers from time to time; but no solution has been found. The Government, however, believes literally that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, and there is little likelihood of a change. Guano is rich in nitrogen and phosphates—the most satisfactory fertiliser of all for wheat crops.

Finally, there are the seals. I walked to within twenty yards of them before an old warrior raised the alarm and the whole herd lumbered away slowly, with whiskers turned angrily in my direction, until they slipped into the sea. Once afloat, they formed an inquisitive semicircle, faced the rock where I stood gazing down on them, and stared back boldly. These seals, too, have often been blamed for the fact that hauls of fish in False Bay are not what they were

‘in the old days.’ Seven years ago a party of seasick riflemen were authorised to thin out the herd. They made poor shooting from their motor-boats, and the seals remained on the island. Since then the seals have seldom been disturbed. The demand for sealskins has been poor in recent years. But there will be slaughter on a large scale if the market improves—South African skins fetch as much as forty-eight shillings apiece in London when fashion favours the seal. The waters round Seal Island will be streaked with red, and I shall stay away.

Seals have poor eyesight, but if the hunters approach them down-wind they pick up the scent a mile away. ‘Once you frighten a herd, they grow cunning,’ an old hand told me. ‘You’ll be lucky to get within clubbing distance of them. You have to wait days for a chance—a calm sea and the wind right. Then you may kill a thousand in a morning. I’ve seen it.’

Years ago the docile, silky seals waited innocently to be butchered. Now they have grown restless. They post sentinels to warn them of the coming of the raiders. A female seal, cornered with its young, will turn and fight. And if a man shows cowardice, the female will follow him with dangerous jaws snapping viciously.

The raiders make a determined rush as the seals lie sunning themselves on the flat rocks. Rifles cannot be used as the bullets would damage the valuable skins. So the hunters club right and left mercilessly, with never a pause until their victims are dead and the survivors have found safety in the sea.

Great care is taken in removing the pelts, for a slip of the knife means a ruined skin. The whaleboat is loaded with pelts; and as the boat, dripping blood, rows back to the ship, sharks follow eagerly in the hope of snatching the

skins. Once on board, the skins are salted and stowed away in barrels. A man may earn £400 at sealing in the short season of four months, but he lives dangerously.

Sealing is a government monopoly in South African waters. But, owing to fogs and the remoteness of the islands, there are wonderful chances for poachers. Outside the three-mile limit, of course, seals may be taken by anyone, so that the poachers always have a ready explanation of their valuable freight.

Some poachers use large mesh nets, others dynamite. The raiders fix a charge of dynamite on a buoy and allow it to drift down on a herd of seals. A desperate trade indeed, and one which has not changed much since Kipling wrote his 'Rhyme of the Three Sealers.'

I found traces of the Royal Navy on the northern end of the island. There is the stout white flagstaff, a seamanlike job, from which a distress signal may be flown by the marooned men. Seamen visit Seal Island once a year to paint the flagstaff. Among the rocks were fragments of old shells, relics of the days when Seal Island was a target for the ships of the Africa Squadron. Birds and seals must have short memories. Great care is taken nowadays to avoid frightening the revenue-producing birds from the islands. But it seems that precautions are hardly necessary when a naval bombardment fails to disperse a bird population. (Up the coast at Lambert Bay recently I observed another example of the tenacity with which the birds cling to an island home. The malagas hordes on Penguin Islet remained undisturbed while all the machinery of a modern harbour-construction plant was at work in their midst. They made way for the cranes and cement blocks, but they did not abandon the island.)

While I wandered and climbed about the weird, teeming rock, the men had brought the stores up the steep slope to

the hut. Beside this one-roomed building, on a flat rock face, bygone gangs of labourers had painted their names and the dates of their occupation. I suppose they felt the need of some little monument after their toil and loneliness.

Cyril Fernandez seemed a trifle wistful as the time for parting drew near. 'Still, we shall be comfortable enough this time,' he said. 'A few years ago there were no huts—only tents. Even in summer the nights on the island are cold. We sleep on the empty guano sacks, and keep a fire going. Wood and water are always left on the island for castaways. During a gale the sea sweeps up almost to the doorway of the hut. New hands are terrified—they think the island will be swamped.'

I asked about the fresh-water supply.

'We never run short,' he declared. 'Casks can always be floated ashore, even when it is impossible to land on the island. There is the flag signal by day for emergencies, and a fire on the highest point of the rock would be noticed at night. Of course, we are careful. Fish and potatoes are cooked in sea water, and taste better that way. Four casks of fresh water, each holding fifty gallons, last a week. We can catch all the fish we want. Sometimes we eat penguin and duiker eggs. The cutter comes once a week with fresh bread and water. As for amusements, we hardly need any. Sleep is the best hobby after a long day's work collecting part of the season's crop of from thirty to eighty tons of guano. A guitar and a pack of cards fill in the gaps. There is no excitement. Years ago, in my father's time, a labourer went mad, walked into the sea and was drowned. More recently a couple of men became bored and left the island unknown to the rest of the gang. They floated off on empty water-barrels and were washed up safely on a beach miles away.'

It was a remarkable escapade in view of the distance, the method chosen, and the man-eating sharks that cruise round Seal Island.

Seal Island must have been explored in Dutch East India Company's days, but the early records do not mention it. I have seen a Customs notice of 1845 offering guano and shells for sale on Seal Island. No doubt the shells would have been used for lime burning, as they are to-day. About a century ago there was a landing-stage on the island to make the shipment of guano easier. It is obvious that the trade now carried on by the Fernandez family was flourishing long ago. At one time walls were built round part of the island to prevent the guano from washing into the sea. The walls, like the landing-stage, have vanished.

But the Seal Island labour goes on in spite of the anger of the sea. The men work within sight of the brilliant lights along the waterfront, the Robinson Crusoes of False Bay. I do not suppose there are many inhabited islands in the world smaller than this inaccessible rock where Cyril Fernandez rules, and his sister Sophia plans the enterprise year after year.

Cape Town, South Africa.

THE KISS.

BY ELEANOR SALTZMAN.

BUT I've known Edith Boyd all my life, David's startled heart-beats told him. Crouching there by the hotbed, he shifted his weight to the other tensed foot and carved another tomato plant from the earth. He dared not look up again, lest he see the naked look of adoration he had surprised on the other's face. Something boyish and awkward raced through his fingers and throat, so that he dropped the trowel clumsily. Just so she stood behind him, her eyes loving the very sight of him crouching beside her hotbed. And the curve of her unconscious, waiting lips kept him bowed there humbly. He thought with something like surprise that she was almost beautiful, all the clean-cut strength of her face softened into yielding at his very presence here. If men could see her so, he knew, they would never let her live here, a spinster, isolated within her own cool self-sufficiency. And then, with a rush, he realised that what kept her aloof was perhaps this bond she felt towards him, welded in their early school-days when they had gone along the road together with their books and lunch.

David Graham got to his feet slowly and laid the trowel on top of a fence-post. 'That will be more than a plenty, Edith,' he said gravely without looking at her. He wondered if she knew he had seen. The cool mask was down once more. 'Lucy'll be tickled to death to get these. Her tomatoes haven't done any good, some way.'

'Take some more.' Edith counted the bouquet of

tomato plants in her hands, the moist earth staining her finger-tips. 'I've got all I need, and several dozen extra. I've sold all I'm going to. Here——'

'No,' David said, and he couldn't keep the sound of gentle gravity out of his voice. 'She don't have a place big enough for more. But we're sure glad to get these. I'm crazy about tomatoes, and when all ours died——'

'That's what I told Lucy,' Edith said and turned away to the steps. 'I knew you liked tomatoes, and so many people haven't had much luck this year.'

You knew I liked tomatoes, David thought, watching her fold the plants in a newspaper. You remembered, and again the strange something raced through him, to his finger-tips. Edith. Why did I never think? He took the folded paper from her earth-darkened fingers, and this time he looked at her, straight, and smiled. Out of the tight cleaving in his throat he smiled to her, and the cool tan mask dissolved, imperceptibly, so that the lips of spinster Edith Boyd were soft and waiting. Beneath the dear blending of their glances meeting, steady, knowing each other, something told him, with the surprise of a man newly aware of a woman, your eyes are grey. Beautifully grey in clear tan face. He took the package from her hands without breaking their eyes' caressing, and his fingers closed, momentarily, over hers. He knew, as a man knows, the woman-quiver of those fingers. And he knew that some long-waiting thing in her was glad because of this moment, broken free from the cool reserve that was her life. He turned away.

'Thank you, Bet,' he said, and he heard his own voice, still a man's to a woman newly beloved. He knew she stood straight and proud, loving the sight of him leaving her, the slight stoop of his shoulders, his untidy black hair. He felt, still, the odd sound of that boyish nickname on his

lips, leaping into the moment's warmth from a distant, half-forgotten childhood, and he wished with sudden passion that he had kissed her. He wanted, aching, to know the feel of her lips. He swung through the gate, scarcely aware that he had opened it, and walked swiftly down the road lest his feet turn back to the woman standing quietly beside her house watching him go. He dared not think of it, he told himself, frightened a little by the too-strong leaping of his blood to reach this new, desirable Edith.

Edith Boyd, very fabric of his life. So much a part of all these years of living, he had never really seen her. He thought, almost writhing, of his boyish jubilation when he told her of Lucy. She had laughed at his eagerness. Then she had felt so, and had covered her hurt with her laughing. He had been angry, thinking she was making fun of him. I didn't understand, Edith. Why didn't I know?

The earth of the road was still moist from the heavy dew of the night. The thick June shade of the maples lay cool across the way, and the sun reached the beaten earth only here and there, through thinned branches' lacework. The freshness of the morning came deep into David's lungs and quieted the racing of his blood. Edith Boyd loves me, he said over and over to himself, and the strangeness of it ebbed and became a part of the vital essence of the morning. It was a part of the sunlight, clear and dew-touched, that came warm across the early summer green of the pastures. It was a part of the cattle grazing, of the colt that wheeled and raced down the hill towards the windmill and the water. Edith Boyd loves me, and beyond, the new green of the willows in the slough was alive and vital. Later there would be wild grapes there on the old, old vines clinging to the willows' branches.

He smiled once to himself, aware, fleetingly, of the strange

alchemy that works in a man, knowing he is desirable in a woman's eyes. It was powerful in his veins because it came to him as something new, something at once a part of all this, his world, and yet different from it. Not since the early, distant days with Lucy had he felt it. He had known, these dozen years, only the day-after-day quiet of his planting, his breeding, his feeding. He accepted himself as Dave, husband of Lucy and father of Lucette. The watering, the haying with Edith—

He turned again to the thought of Edith Boyd. And with his husbanding and ploughing and fathering, this tall, capable woman was, indeed, a woman and he had never known it. He had a consciousness of the years of which Edith had been a vital, living part of him, ever since his birth here on this farm and, barely two months later, her birth on the farm joining. He had never realised how deeply this was true till now. Their early squabbles over David's mongrel pup. And then the long, long day when they, at six, half frightened, half eager, first had gone to school together. For years they had shared even the old-fashioned double seat at school, and once, on a blistering occasion when he pinched her and she broke her slate over his head, they had both forfeited their recess game of Andy Over, and religiously studied geography, angry shoulders turned against each other.

Back there, somewhere, it had begun. And he wondered why it had made her withdraw all her womanhood behind a wall of assumed indifference to the state of her hair, the lifting of her grey eyes beneath their lashes. He had accepted her so, requiring of her races, accuracy at the bat, and fearless decapitation of spring fries, if need arose. Grandly she had measured up until she was this Edith Boyd. And it was all part and parcel of this essential womanhood

in her that let her lips soften, waiting for his, even now that they were thirty-two and he was husband of Lucy and father of Lucette.

He put one foot in the ladder-rungs of the woven wire fence and leaped over into his clover. Already it was lush and deep, so that his feet were lost within it. He walked along the fence and went back across the acres towards the windmill. He walked erect, his old blue shirt a garment of grace, because a woman loved him. The open scents of new clover, of dew-wet cornfields faintly green against the field beyond, all came into his nostrils alive, and a part of this new vitality Edith Boyd had given him. He walked, a king, across his acres and found the strangeness of a new humility within his kingship. If I had seen her so, he thought, and knew that by the blindness of his senses he had lost a dear, dear thing. Against the quick impulsiveness of Lucy's eagerness he pitted, unconsciously, Edith Boyd's quiet, deep-rooted fineness and saw his life a different thing. And he knew, humbly, that a great part of himself had gone into that fineness. He felt again, like a momentary stricture in his throat, this outgoing towards his Edith as he realised that now he would never know the warmth of her arms, the yielding of herself at the pressure of her lips to his. And he knew it as an injustice, so linked with his own had been Bet's life. No wall should be. They had grown together. Life had cheated them, as they had cheated each other. He set his lips against the morning, striding across his fields towards the windmill. And something boyish in him cried, angrily, as of old, 'Bet, Bet, hey, where you been? Come, help me, Bet.'

Even that Bet was gone. Died in those years when he had found Lucy and had tried to share even that joyous discovery with her. Then Bet had died, laughed to death

by this new Edith. And after his anger cooled and he had seen Edith and Lucy grow, slowly, into dear, treasured friendship, he had grown accustomed to the presence of this tall, capable Edith who made tomato preserves with Lucy and hayed with him. If Bet was gone, David was still there, David to her when all the world had made him Dave.

Even now, in his reluctance, he saw what he had done and what Edith had done, loving the eager child Lucy. He knew the fineness of his Edith by the very token of her dearness to his wife. Loving him, she had still measured up as she had always done. And he knew that they had done a good job in the growing up of his eager little wife Lucy. Edith was like that. He never knew her to fail in what she set her hand to. She had practised till she could outswim him, outrace him, beat him even at arithmetic——

Then why had she, wanting him, concealed it from him so carefully, so successfully that his unconsciousness had gone unchallenged? He climbed another fence and, releasing the lever of the windmill, stood, eyes on the lowered level of the water, moss-green at its depths in the great metal tank. Why had Edith done this thing, letting him go without so much as an effort to claim her own? He watched the water come from the little pipe, hesitantly at first, then with rhythmic pulse-beats. David gathered up again his parcel of tomato plants and went, slowly, up the cowpath along the draw towards the house. And the dew left the grass reluctantly as the sun came, warm and warmer, across his shoulders.

He came to his gate and set it ajar, so that he could go through. He wanted, suddenly, to tell Lucy and ask her why it had turned out like this. Hurrying a little, he crossed the lots and climbed another fence into the chicken yards. Lucy, her small dark head poised to think on it, would

know. He knew Lucy could tell him why Edith loved him and yet treasured Lucy, helping her child into the world, mothering little Lucette, the child of him, David, and another. She would know why Edith had let him go without telling him he loved her in this strange, deep-stirring way. Lucy would know. . . .

But it was Lucette who saw him first and came running, her dark hair tumbled, her dirty little face eager to laugh with him, her fingers reaching to tug at his. 'What did Aunt Edith send?' she demanded. 'Anything for me, Daddy? Anything for me? What's in that package you brought from Aunt Edith's?'

He felt the stirring of his bewilderment like a pain among his thoughts. 'Tomato plants for Mother,' he said gently, past the pain. 'She didn't send you anything, but she said if you'd come down this afternoon and help her find the first strawberries, she'd bring you home by the store and get you an ice-cream cone.'

'A double dip, Daddy? Would it be a double dip?'

'Yes,' he said, and laughed a little, almost like a catch in his voice. If Edith got it, surely it would be a double dip.

'Can I take the plants to Mother?' she asked, eager in her satisfaction even as Lucy was eager. 'Give me the tomato plants for Mother.'

He had a sudden unreasonable jealousy to give the plants to Lucy, from Edith, himself. Then he caught his breath against the thought. 'For Mother, Lucette,' he said, almost formally, and let her run ahead of him into the house. Lucy, too, he thought, and again he felt this strange desire to come to Lucy with the deep hurt of his new love denied. Crazy, his brain told him, but the urge was there, so that his wistful eyes sought her happy ones in their bewilderment at this strange way life had cheated him. 'Edith sent them,' he

said and smiled a little, like a child. 'She wanted to give you more.'

'Edith would,' she said, and, as if unconscious of his wistfulness, unwrapped the parcel quickly, her long brown fingers quick about the paper. He heard her happy words against his thoughts—

'She does so much,' she said in her warm, alive voice, her own black hair tumbled, her dark eyes asparkle. 'And she'd outdo herself on tomato plants. You like tomatoes so well and she'd remember— Here, what's this— Oh, yes, my aster plants she promised. And look how many——'

She turned to him, and he thought, unbearably, of Edith holding the tomato plants like a bouquet. Why didn't Edith tell me she felt that way? he asked Lucy mutely. But she only stood, happy and secure, showing him the aster plants. The dear, alive eagerness of her eyes, the laughter of her lips. Decades of farming and wifing would never still that laughter. Back of her laughing he knew, from of old, that Lucy was wise. She would know why Edith stood by so and let him go . . . Lucy would know. He took an eager step towards her, past Lucette tugging at her mother's dress, to tell her of the strawberries and ice cream. Edith's strawberries, Edith's asters, for his wife and child. But for him, withheld— And he hadn't even kissed her. Lucy would know.

'Yes,' he said, and his own voice sounded odd in his ears. Tomato plants for him. 'Asters and tomatoes. Edith's a great old girl.' He felt a sudden surge towards Lucy, such as he had not known for years. Her lips, too, so different, yet a woman's. The new stirring of his blood reached out toward her, so that he took her, aster plants and all, into his arms. 'Two, three grand girls,' he said,

still in the strangely thickened voice. His lips crushed hers, hungry as a boy's, and the feel of her own, responding, answered, mute, his own mute question. Edith, measuring herself against his careless boyhood, had forgotten how. The woman of Lucy's quick, mute yielding told him Edith had only tried too hard. But it was a lie. This new Bet's lips, only this morning, told him it was a lie. God, how he loved his wife. He let Lucy's lips go, reluctantly, and laid his cheek against her tumbled hair. Swallowing against the deep, deep pain lumped heavily within him, he closed his eyes as if to shut away the dear, soft yielding of those other lips that he could never touch.

Iowa.

SPRING.

*Did Noah, imprisoned in the Ark,
High on that arid mountain peak,
Long for the errant dove to speak?
To tell him of the meadows green,
Of all the new-sprung flowers seen?
After the dark,
The speedwell heavens overhead
Recalled the fields he used to tread
In freedom: (with untrammelled feet
Walking the dewy clover sweet)
Ere shame and grief
Darkened the only world he knew.
O pledge of living joy when flew
Home to that doubting heart the dove—
Bearing a sign of deathless Love—
The first green leaf.*

MARJORIE KIDD.

A BOX OF LETTERS.

BY CAROLINE M. DUNCAN-JONES.

It is a fascinating occupation, when one has a certain amount of time to spare, to dip into a collection of old family letters ; and from the faded ink and criss-cross writing to form a picture of the little daily doings and the bigger sorrows and joys of a bygone generation. Recently I had occasion to look through a box which contains many hundreds of letters and records of my forbears, the Harnesses, a family of honourable English stock. I found there a mirror of life which, lived less than 150 years ago, had a spaciousness and fragrance, combined with hardships and limitations, of which we have no conception to-day. These letters, simple and ordinary as they are, have a savour and a courtesy that are seldom found in our present hurried telegraphic correspondence.

The study of the manner of life that they depict may well begin with a letter written to his mother in the year 1800 by Sir Alexander Croke, Barrister-at-law, of Studley Priory, a kinsman of the Harness family. One cannot help sympathising with Mrs. Croke who was thus suddenly presented with a grandchild and a daughter-in-law of four years' standing ; but possibly the presentation of the *fait accompli* was preferable to the almost inevitable opposition that must have arisen. The letter at any rate tells a charming and unusual love story.

‘*Dear Madam,*

‘*With the half note,¹ I have to communicate to you a long*

¹ A reference to the custom of cutting a bank-note in half and enclosing each portion in a separate letter as a precaution against robbery.

history, or two, at which perhaps you may be a little surprised. There is an Arabian maxim that every man should dig a well, plant a tree, and make a babe. I should have thought myself very deficient if I had not endeavoured to do my duty accordingly. Last year I dug a new pond at Studley, upon the green, near the Blacksmith's shop. Of trees you know I have planted many, and I have now to inform you that I have not been wanting in respect to the third branch. Can you believe, my dear Mother, that it is now near four years since I entered into the holy state, that I am the father of a fine boy, two years and two months old, and expect a little companion to him in October? Bless me! but who is the lady? Well, you shall hear all about it. You must know then that there was a pretty little girl at Studley, whom I began with admiring as a child; as she grew older my poor heart became infected, in short, it is not much to my credit, but it was something like the story of Pamela and ended in marriage. From that time till now, my Adelaide has been at School, and has received the best education it has been in my power to give her, and I have the satisfaction of finding that she has profited by these opportunities, completely to my expectations, and is now as well to fit as any young ladies of her age. She writes extremely well both for matter and manner, understands French, draws extremely well, and has a little music. But what is more than all she is a girl of an excellent disposition, mild and amiable in her manner, and of good religious principles. In truth, my dear mother, after four years experience, so far from repenting of what perhaps may be thought an imprudence, were it to do again I would not hesitate one moment to take her as my beloved wife, and I have every reason to believe she has a sincere affection for me.—I hope my dear mother will forgive my not making her acquainted with this event before, and had you been in town, I should certainly have made you my first confidant, and should have hoped to have profited by your advice and friendship. But it was such a thing to enter into in a letter, and we had hopes of seeing you long before this so deferred it till we met. . . . I am now bringing my Adelaide out into the world, and have introduced her to a few of my friends, who have been very kind. . . . It is no longer a secret, but we do not tell anybody who she was. So you may tell Mrs. Harness with my love, but let it go no further.'

It is evident that Adelaide was able to fill her place in society and was duly accepted by her mother-in-law. The next glimpse of the family is in 1804, when Sir Alexander has been for three years Judge of the Admiralty Court in Nova Scotia.

‘Halifax, N.S., May 16th, 1804.

‘My dear Madam,’ he writes,

‘I should have written to you a hundred times before this, but as Adelaide is a constant correspondent I thought you would consider her letters the same as mine, especially as I get a peep at your letters in return, which gives me the opportunity of knowing that my good ancient is well.’

He goes on to express some concern at his mother’s tendency towards popery, describes their charming farm and villa in Nova Scotia, named after the Studley at home, and tells of their neighbours. He rejoices that a President from Worcester College, Oxford, has been found for their new university. The children are ‘all very fine,’ ‘perfectly healthy and grow fast.’ They all ‘send their little loves to Jane, Jemima, and Charles,’ their Harness cousins. Mrs. Croke evidently spent much time with her niece, the wife of Colonel William Harness, who lived on a small property at Dronfield near Chesterfield. She appears constantly in the letters of Mrs. Harness and her children as their beloved ‘Aunty Croke.’

Commissioner John Harness, the brother of Colonel William, was a famous naval surgeon, discoverer of a cure for scurvy and a friend of Admiral Collingwood, and of Lord Nelson, who was godfather to his daughter Mary. There is good reason to think that it was Dr. Harness who attended Nelson on the occasion when he lost his eye. Here is a letter from Collingwood bearing the news of Nelson’s victory and death. It is addressed to Doctor Harness, M.D., Sick & Hurt Board, Somerset Place, London.

'Queen, Gib^r. bay, Nov. 19th, 1805.

'My dear Sir,

'I am sure no one would more sincerely rejoice in our success than you would—it has been great indeed—and we have much reason to be thankful but alas ! amidst our joy we have also great cause of lamentation in the death of our excellent friend Lord Nelson—who was killed by a musket ball—and many others we have had of highly estimable character—Duff and Cooke were my friends—and cannot remember their fall but with great grief. My ship shattered and torn is gone to England—and in her is Mr. Lloyd the surgeon—a man for whose skill and character I have a great respect—and wish very much to be of service to him—I would be much obliged if you could remove him into some situation where he might not go to sea again. I intend to do him all the kindness I can for he deserves it—and would be glad if he could in the mean time be appointed to anything stationary that would prevent his going to sea again—I believe if it is in your power you will oblige me—I shall receive it as a very great kindness.

'I hope your sons are well, and am my dear Sir with great regard

'Your faithfull Humble Serv.,

'Cutht. Collingwood.

'I am growing very feeble—and very old—worn to a thread.'

The doctor's brother, the gallant soldier, Colonel William Harness, married Miss Elizabeth Bigge, whose mother was sister to Mrs. Croke. That the course of their young love did not run entirely smoothly is proved by a letter from the lady in which the ardour of her affection is masked indeed, but not hidden, under the stilted propriety of the style. She writes in an elegant Italian hand without address or date.

'One of the best of men will I flatter myself excuse my entering on a correspondence with him clandestinely—but will with me think it inconsistent with the duty I owe to the most indulgent of Mother's ; let this one letter for the present suffice—some happier period may arrive when I may be allowed by my dearest friends the privilege of writing to you—until then—be content with only hear-

ing of me through the kind friendship of your valuable correspondent who I know from his native goodness of Heart will take pleasure in adding favours to the many we have already received from him . . . as I must be convinced that Interest has had no share in your attachment to me, I will therefore place the most implicit faith in the affection you profess—my sentiments in regard to yourself you are not a stranger to—but I cannot be happy whilst I feel a consciousness of doing wrong by engaging in an affair of the greatest consequence to myself and friends, without their knowledge and approbation—yet I have much to hope from the good opinion my mother entertains of you—and I know she is not ignorant that you once had a partiality for me—I wish I could take courage and disclose the whole—but at present I find myself unequal to the task. How happy have I been made, when at any time your name has been mentioned—to hear my mother join in praising, and speaking of you in the highest terms possible; in short she believes you to be a truly good young man—the principal requirement I'm sure she would wish for in the Husband for her child—and I am certain her views for me are not beyond a genteel sufficiency to support me in the station in which I have been bred up—trusting in your constancy I will endeavour to be as happy as I can—and will with you repose the whole on the mercy of a just Providence and with patience wait the event. . . . Your Brother Richard often pleasures us with his company—he is a sensible clever little fellow—and a great favourite with us all—with everybody—and not the less so with me for the great resemblance he bears to a certain friend of mine who is seldom absent from my thoughts—good health and happiness constantly attend you is the sincere wish of her who will be

‘Ever yours
‘E. B.’

Probably the temporary lack of a ‘genteel sufficiency’ was the only obstacle in the way of their engagement and ‘Betsy’ married her Mr. Harness (as he was then) somewhere about the year 1790. We see him in his miniature, resplendent in elegant frilled shirt and the scarlet coat of his regiment, with its gold epaulettes and white facings. A good, grave face under a powdered wig with neat curls. His wife’s miniature

is there too, but not as he knew her, for William and his 'dearest Betsy' were not granted many years of married life ; and for the greater part of the time William was serving abroad. She appears in her picture a strong-featured, elderly lady of much dignity and beauty wearing a truly marvellous frilled white headdress.

In the box is a letter from a waggish friend of the family, written before the wedding.

'Winchendon,
'Thursday Morn^{ing} ^{re}vor.

'Dear Miss,

'If it is a fine day to-morrow, and You should be inclin^{ed} to walk, bend your lovely Footsteps towards Hartwell Langley, that I may have the Pleasure of meeting, and Honour of greeting you. Did You ever know such heavenly weather ? Do You not admire it ? Doesn't it exhilarate, and give you Spirits ? Do not you wish for its Continuance ? Do you take proper advantage of it, and strengthen yourself by Exercise ? There's a Military Word, and, doesn't that please you ? I say, Bigg ; I wish You had a good thousand a year ; We should see You then dashing away with an Equipage unequall'd : A superb Carriage, beautiful Horses, and the handsomest and most elegant Harness in the world.

'I hope you are all well, Yea, very well : It's well if you are : Farewell.

'I am
'Ben Vassar.

'Ma's Compliments to the Family.'

In 1795 William Harness was serving in the campaign in the Dutch wars. Aunt Croke writes to commiserate with his wife.

Hampstead, Jan^{ry}. 27th, 1795.

'You have well imagined my Dearest Betsy the late anxiety I have felt on your and dear Mr. Harness's account, for indeed I never suffer'd more than during the recent transactions in Holland.

. . . To hear that he was safe and well was joy indeed. . . .
When I last wrote to you how unexpected was this dreadful anxiety, but I think the next day brought the account of the perfidy and treachery of the French, and the severe setting in of the frost forwarded their diabolical purposes—how detestable are the Dutch for their conduct.

She goes on to tell her country niece of the London fashions.

'The hair is worn quite the same—the bonnets are very small, and velvet most fashionable—Mrs. P. intends buying herself one when she goes next to Town—I will get Swainson to copy it in paper or some way, and send it in the parcel—I don't think full muslin sleeves are now worn, but will enquire—your sattin gown will only want a very short waist, plaited very far back—three broad tucks in it are enough—but more than four must not be. I dare say that you have strings on the sides of your stays, to tie your coats up high to—or else the space from your gown through your upper coat will show itself and look ugly.'

The next view of Elizabeth Harness is contained in a small brown leather-covered volume which was her diary and account book for the year 1797. The first entry is 'This book 1s.' We see her then, the careful young housekeeper with her three little children, the adored husband away fighting in India. Every week or two there is an entry 'wrote to my dear Mr. Harness' or 'a letter from dear Mr. Harness'—letters which took two or three months at least to arrive. In June she notes that her letter has gone by 'the last ship this season,' and it is not till September 17th that she hears again from her 'handsome Harness.'

Household matters and little acts of charity are faithfully chronicled. A frequent entry is 'Beggar $\frac{1}{2}d.$,' and from time to time a certain Molly Hawley is paid sums varying from 1s. to 3s. for 'the poor children's schooling.' Five times during the year occurs the 'Great Wash' and on other

occasions ale and small beer are brewed. Milk goes up 1d. a gallon, and the fact that the family had rabbits for dinner is worthy of mention. Sixpence is spent on sending Nanny to the Play and three days later the two maids go to the Play for 1s. An occasional twopence is spent on Toys. The children's doings are now and then reported. 'Dear Jemima' is inoculated, she has her first shoes, which cost 1s. 3d., and a little later she walks alone. Jane is evidently learning to sew, and 1s. is spent on a thimble for her. Charles has a birthday on March 21st, and a month later it is recorded that 'Dear Charles put on his trousers to-day.' A good deal of money (according to the standards of the time) is spent on clothes for this precious little boy. 'Cloth for Charles's night and day shirts' costs £1 6s. 0d., cambric for Charles is 13s., making his clothes 12s. 6d. and blue cloth for his great-coat costs 14s. 6d. For herself Mrs. Harness notes that 12s. 3d. is spent on 'a straw bonnet lined.' Letters are a heavy expense, and cost anything from 6d. to 1s. 6d. It is a quiet life in which the chief excitement (apart from Mr. Harness's letters) is drinking tea with friends. 'Aunt Croke' is a frequent companion on these expeditions; and in turn the same friends come to drink tea and sometimes stay to supper.

Later on Charles goes away to school at Leicester and sends a letter calculated to wring a mother's heart. In an uneven blotted schoolboy hand he writes :

'My very very dear Mama,

'I write you these lines to tell you that yesterday morning I felt a violent pain in my head which continued from that time till I came into School in the evening. Master Hill said that it was the custom for every boy when he had anything the matter with him to tell Mr. Heyrick. I did so, he felt my pulse, and asked me whether my head felt hot. I said it did and thereupon he told me to keep as still as possible that night and to-day I feel very sick and ill. When I saw you on Thursday I did not think it was the last

time of seeing you therefore I did not kiss you, but I hope I shall see you and my sisters again before you leave Oadby as I think it my duty to kiss you dear Mama You have not sent me my French Grammar, as I want it to get my lesson.

'Have you heard from dear Papa and send my love to Auntie when you see her. Send a thousand kisses to Jane and Jemima. Excuse the many blunders I have made as my tears confused me very much.

'Adieu my dear Mama,

'Believe me I am and always shall be

'Your truly affectionate and dutiful Son

'C. P. W. Harness.

'P.S.—Pray answer my letter to come by Mr. Mile. I am very glad to hear you are all well.'

Soon, however, he writes in happier vein.

Leicester, April 11th, 1801.

'I am glad to tell you that I am in good health, and like school very well, also I go on with my French very well; I am glad to hear that James Walch dined with you, and I did not wonder at Jane and Jemima being glad because we always were so when he came. . . . There is going to be a speaking day soon, and the four headboys will speak, and the Mayor and Corporation will come and hear them.'

A letter written to 'Auntie Croke' gives a cheerful picture of nursery life at Dronfield.

'Dear Auntie

'I thank you very much for your kind letter and the half-crown. I am very well Pray write to me soon and tell Jane to write soon. I should like very much to be in the band to call you to breakfast now, I suppose little Jemima plays on the little trumpet.'

Another letter to his aunt shows the difficulties in the way of returning for the holidays.

'I do not know how I am to get home, without I go by Derby and then I must go by myself, without any body comes for me.

All the Chaises etc. will be taken for people to go to Nottingham to vote, and if I do get a place in the Coach, I shall not be able to get through Nottingham for the mob, so that I must go by Derby for I cannot go any other way.'

Meanwhile, the father of this little family is campaigning in India with Sir Arthur Wellesley. An extract from the *Bombay Gazette* of August 29th, 1808, tells of a fort 'carried by escalade, with the utmost gallantry and rapidity' by forces under the command of Lieut.-Col. Harness, Field-Officer of the day. There are many letters in the box from the Colonel to the wife whom he was never to see again—long, loving, soldierly letters.

Several communications from the future Iron Duke are also to be found in the collection. Most of them are concerned with military detail, but here is one with a more human touch.

'Seringapatam, February 2nd, 1808.

'My dear Colonel,

'I have received your letter of the 31st January which has given me great satisfaction. It rarely happens (particularly in this country) that it is in the power of an officer in command to please those who are under his orders; and when he is so fortunate it is to be attributed as much to their good dispositions as to any efforts he may have made for that purpose. I regret exceedingly on publick as well as on private grounds, that the 74th rgt. is removed from Bangalore; But you must have been long enough in this country to perceive that the public Interest and convenience are not upon all occasions the cause of the publick measures.

'I don't think that your corps will be drafted At least not for some time; although I have seen the resolutions of thanks from the Court of Directors, and their songs of triumph, the best Item of all of which is the prospect of permanent peace in India, and of course the consequent diminution of the military establishments and expences.

'I think you are right in going to England even if the 74th should remain here.'

'Believe me My Dear Colonel

'Your's most faithfully,

'Arthur Wellesley.'

Lieut.-Col. Harness,

74th rgt.

The Colonel never reached England, and it was only eleven months later, on January 2nd, 1804, that he died. 'His country has lost a brave and distinguished officer,' writes his friend, Thomas Christie, 'society a most valuable member, those who enjoyed his intimacy a most estimable friend.' And James Walch, father of Charles's schoolboy friend, writes: 'Every officer and soldier in the 80th Regt. feels the death of that worthy Colonel with the utmost regret.'

General Wellesley himself wrote an account of the Colonel's sickness and death.

'Camp at Eliehpour, June 10th, 1804.

'Dear Sir,

'I received only last night your letter of the 25 April and I beg to assure you that the respect and regard which you profess for your late friend Colonel Harness have tended to increase the good opinion which I had already entertained of your character. . . .

'Colonel Harness was taken ill a day or two before the battle of Argann on the 29th Nov^{br}., and he was so unwell upon that occasion as to be delirious when the Troops were going into the action and I was obliged to order him into his Palanquin. After the battle of Argann the Army made some rapid marches towards Eliehpour in order to prevent the Enemy from taking a new position under the protection of the fort of Ganilghan which did Col. Harness no good; and on our arrival at Eliehpour he went into that place for the benefit of his health. He remained there during the siege of Ganilghan and I saw him afterwards as the Army was marching through Eliehpour towards Nagpour and he was much recovered. Peace having been concluded with the Rajah of Berar, the Army returned to the westward through Eliehpour; and I

saw Colonel Harness again much recovered ; but he appeared to have a shortness of breath which I attributed to weakness, particularly as he had no complaint at that time, yet said that he did not feel himself sufficiently recovered to join the Army, a measure to which I earnestly urged him. The last time I saw him was about the 25th Dec^r. and a few days afterwards I heard of his Death. . . .

‘ Believe me, dear Sir,
 ‘ ever your most faithfully,
 ‘ Arthur Wellesley.’

It is a very different small boy from the child of two or three years ago who writes to his mother bravely shouldering his responsibility as the only man of the family—a characteristic that constantly appears in his letters as he gets older.

Brampton, Sept. 21st, 1804.

‘ My very dear Mama,

‘ You cannot think how glad I am to hear that you are pretty well in health ; as you say, *What a change it is !* but you may depend upon it, that I will make you as happy as I possibly can, by attending to my lessons when at school, and by being dutiful to you when at home. I feel very dull at times when I think about it, but when I do, I recollect that my dear Papa is in a much happier world than we are, and that we shall soon meet again.’

Presently Charles leaves school and goes to the Royal Military College at Great Marlow. The family are now living at Aylesbury, and later they move to Stanmore in Middlesex. Charles’s letters and college reports show him capable, upright, amusing, affectionate, full of tender concern for his widowed mother and his two young sisters. He longs for news from home and in his letters to his sisters—loving, teasing, saucy letters—he sometimes complains of the infrequency of their correspondence. ‘ Don’t faint or rave at the beginning of this letter,’ he writes as the heading of a missive to the errant Jane ; and continues :

'My dearest Jane,

'Why have I not heard from you ; I have even thought that you were offended at my saying that I would not write to you out of spite (because she had not written to him) ; but, however, be that as it may ; if you do not forgive me, I forgive you.'

In 1807 Charles passes 'a very strict examination before the Duke of Kent.' The following year the cadets are reviewed by the Prince of Wales.

'He said,' writes Charles to his mother, 'that upon his honor, he was never so much delighted in his life, that no regiment could have done better ; and though I say it that should not say it, He asked who I was, and said I was a very fine young fellow, the Duke of Clarence was with him, and said the same. There was likewise a very fine show of female beauties in the College Grounds, I only wished for you to make it compleat.'

In 1809 Charles sailed with his regiment for India. Here is his miniature as he must have looked at about this time—an attractive curly-headed young man in blue coat and ample white stock with a good open face and steady brown eyes. His farewell letter to his sisters shows something of the trials of separation in those days of slow journeys and uncertain posts, and expresses elder-brotherly concern for their ladylike conduct.

'Newport, Isle of Wight,

'Febr^y. 9th, 1809.

'Perhaps you, my dearest girls, may not have an opportunity of hearing from me again for these six months, but depend upon it, you will never be from my thoughts. Pray, dear Jemima practise regularly at Miss Woodcock's, I shall have an opportunity of learning the flute on the voyage. Do not read any more novels, but read clever books to my aunt. Adieu, once more, my dearest Sisters. Adieu.'

A letter from a friend of the late Colonel gives a glimpse of Charles on his arrival in India.

Sept. 2nd, 1809,
Madras.

'From L. Norris, Lieut.-Col.

'My dear Madam,

'We were made very happy by the receipt of your kind letter by your dear Son, who is indeed a very fine young Man, he had been a month in the country before he found us out and only a few days before he was ordered to join his corps at Bangalore which is about 200 miles from this. But during those few days we had the pleasure of his company, I believe, some part of every day, poor fellow he struck me as being very like my dear friend his Father. . . . He is indeed a very fine Youth and it really grieved us to think what you must have felt at parting with him.

'The young man introduced himself to me and said his name was Harness, judge of my astonishment for I had not the least idea of ever seeing the Son of my much lamented friend in India. . . .

'He left Madras in high health and spirits and I have no doubt he will do very well particularly as the climate does not seem to disagree with him.'

Charles was seven years in India. He writes constantly and his letters are full of news. He dances, he acts, he gets into debt, he shows himself a keen and useful member of his profession.

'Seringapatam, Oct. 11th, 1812.

'My dearest Jane,

' . . . would to God I were with you, and accompanying you at all your Balls, and in all your rides. In India, we are completely exiles. We have had but one dance at Seringapatam since our arrival . . . that was . . . certainly a very pleasant one. You must know, dear Jane, that I am a great Lady's Man, and shall certainly, unless you guard them against it, captivate the hearts of all the young ladies at Stanmore. Do you think that you can find one of sense and beauty that will ensnare mine in return ?'

And eighteen months later :

‘Quilon, April 16th, 1814.

‘My own dearest Sisters,

‘We make as much of Quilon as is possible and I assure you have a great deal of gaiety, and the 80th itself contribute largely to it. We have built a very pretty little Theatre. . . . I appeared for the first time in the character of Captain Absolute in the Rivals, and though I say it who should not say it, gained a great deal of applause. . . . James, Mrs. Shaw, and myself, all three drank dear *Jemima*’s health in a bumper on the 31st of March, and we shall not forget dear *Jane*’s on the 15th of July.’

In 1813, according to the curious practice of the time, Mrs. Harness buys her son a captaincy.

‘Seringapatam, 28 Feb^y, 1813.

‘How can I sufficiently thank you, my dearest Mama, for the purchase of my company? I have seen my promotion in the Gazette, and my name as Captain in the Army list.’

All through that year he is eagerly hoping for leave and in December we find him drawing out money for the expenses of the voyage to England. But he was disappointed, and it is not until 1815 that the prospect of leave becomes almost a certainty. In preparation for his coming he writes a frank, penitent letter about his money difficulties.

‘Quilon, January 3rd, 1815.

‘My ever dearest Mother,

‘My application for leave of absence has been forwarded by the Commander-in-Chief at Madras to Lord Moira for his approval so that I have now little doubt of success. I am therefore making every arrangement, and I trust before the middle of next month, that I shall be on my voyage to Old England, to the best of mothers, and to my dearest Sisters. I cannot keep from myself, my dearest Mama, that I am returning to you as the Prodigal Son, for I have been shamefully extravagant. I shall have much of this nature to confess to you, and I rely on your goodness, which you have ever shown me, to grant me your forgiveness. But this let me assure you

of, Heaven knows it is the only Vice I have been guilty of. I never was a Gambler. I have never ventured nor ever lost or won to the value of a Pagoda. . . . I have never been addicted to drinking. I can write in this manner to a Mother without being accused of self commendation, but true as what I have said it, nothing can atone for my extravagance.'

Two days later Charles writes again on a very different subject. There has been frequent mention in his correspondence of Mrs. Shaw, a young widowed sister of his lifelong friend, James Walch, who, he says, 'is to me a brother and a very excellent young man.' Probably Mrs. Harness was not entirely taken by surprise when her son announced his betrothal to the lady of whom he had written three years before :

'Mrs. Shaw has been some time a widow, and is now but 22, she was married when only 14; what pity that she should have been thus thrown away on such a brute as her husband is represented as having been; she is a most pleasing woman of extremely genteel manners and very well informed, for which she deserves the whole credit of instructing herself.'

He sends a rapturous letter, too long for quotation, looking forward to being home in July or August and introducing his Katherine to his relations.

It is the last letter of the series, and now there comes tragedy; for in September the charming and well-loved young soldier was dead. He must have been about 25 years old. There is no record of the reason or manner of his dying. The final word is with James Walch and contains a generous gesture from a faithful friend. Here is the document :

'Quilon, September 14th, 1815.

'I, Lieutenant James W. H. Walch, do hereby certify that I waive any claim I may be supposed to have to the late Captain Harness's Company (as Senior Lieutenant of the 80th Regiment)

should His Royal Highness the Prince Regent be graciously pleased to allow of the said company being sold for the benefit of his Family.

‘J. Walch,
‘Lt. 80th Regt.’

Before taking leave of this rather tragic family, here are two letters from Jane and Jemima which show the young ladies suitably in pursuit of health and the accomplishments of gentility.

‘My dear Mama,’ writes Jane in a beautiful neat sloping hand,
‘As Jemima has written so short a letter, I will endeavour to recollect something to add. I hear the East India Fleet is expected, so I hope we shall have a letter from dear Charles as the Fleets may have passed each other. I suppose he is now in India. This time next year we shall expect him if he is not arrived and then as you say we may go into Buckinghamshire together. I think you will be pleased with my drawing. I have just finished a large group of flowers, you know you wished me to do them large. With Mr. de Fleury I am drawing Mount Vesuvius, it is to be varnished to look like oils. I think you will like it. Jemima goes on very well with her Music. I would add more but I am just going to take a walk with Mr. Brown. I remain,

‘My dear Mama,
Your affectionate daughter,
‘Jane Harness.’

Jemima writes vivaciously from Brighton, where she has presumably been sent for the sake of her health.

‘Oct. 16th, 1811.

‘Mrs. Bearcroft (her hostess) is an old woman of between fifty and sixty very fat and dressed in black and french grey. She has three daughters, Miss Kitty (who lisps) Miss Fanny and Miss Sukey.

. . . I put on my dark gown this morning as I thought it would not be congruous to wear the light coloured gowns now and the Black Stuff one hereafter. I have a bedroom to myself and here I am sitting writing. . . . I have been this morning to see the people bathe and I am sure I shall not like it at all for they are carried out

of the machine between two immense women who dip them into the Sea and when they come out all their clothes (to be sure they have nothing but a bathing gown) stick to them while all the gentlemen stand and laugh at them—I am to go in to-morrow morning. Though last not least for (I am sure I have been thinking of you all along) I hope you got home safely last night and that you found Anne's cold almost well with Jane and Betsy's nursing and I hope Eliza's is now nearly well pray give my love to them. Heigh-ho !

“ I wish I wish I wish in vain,
I wish I was at home again.”

I wish you would send me some books those travels in Sicily and Malta and those kind of things and my prayer book. Do not let me stay longer than a month. I wish too for a pair of new walking shoes a brown silk cap and a bottle of ink and do not let me go back in the coach for it is so disagreeable I cannot bear it.

Lastly, here is a tit-bit from the bottom of the box—a cobbler's statement of his account. Possibly we have here a reference to the ‘ Miss Kitty (who lisps).’

		£	s.	d.
1796.				
Dec. 4	Clog'd up Miss			10
	Mended Miss			2
1797	Heeltapt bound			11
Jan. 7	up Madam			
	Toe tapt Master			8
Feb ^y . 20	Turned up clog'd up	I	6	
	Mended the Maid			
	Heel tapt Master			3
	Clog'd turned up the Maid	I	3	
	Lined bound and put on piece to Madam	4	3	
March 5	Sticking Miss Kitty			3
16	Soling the Maid			8
April 14th	Tapping Madam			6
	Tacked a piece on Master			2

There are no more Harnesses left in my family. My mother remembers as a child a rather plain old lady who was her cousin, Jemima Harness. She wore a white cap with goffered frills all round her face and had a little pudding specially made for her every day. She also drank cocoa, into which she dipped her buttered toast, a proceeding which horrified her small cousin. Her sister, Jane, who had been a beauty, also died unmarried.

The last of the line to bear the family name was my much-loved great-uncle, General Arthur Harness, great-nephew of Colonel William. With his death in 1927 came the end of the male line in this branch. Their name has passed, but in their letters we still have the record of a simple honourable family who, in conditions not far distant in time, and yet so different from those of the present century, lived and loved and sorrowed, feared God and enjoyed life, much as their descendants do to-day. Outward circumstances may alter, but the greater things do not change.

A CANOE IN BURMA.¹

BY MAJOR R. RAVEN-HART.

CANOE-CRUIISING depends for its success, more than do any of the faster modes of travel, on country and people. Burma is so entirely what the greenhorn like myself expects from 'the East,' palms and pagodas and elephants and jungles ; and the Burmese people are so entirely pleasant, friendly, hospitable, quietly happy, that a canoe-cruise there was bound to be a success.

But in addition, last winter was an ideal moment for the cruise, just as Burma was realising that it had got rid of India at last, and was breathing out a huge waking-sigh of relief. Nowhere did I meet with any regret for what was regarded as an alien, distant, incompetent administration which had kept Burma as the dumping-ground for its less satisfactory junior employees : nowhere, that is, except in one of the most hidebound clubs of the Indianised capital, refuge of the sort of person who is annoyed when the Burman does not understand Hindustani.

Everywhere else there was the feeling : ' No, are we really clear of that gang ? Why, now we can do something ; and perhaps now a Burman may now and then get a job in Burma.'

The subordinate civil service has been an Indian preserve. ' The Burman is lazy, unreliable, dishonest ' : still, even a casual visitor like myself may feel surprise at finding the Post Offices entirely staffed by Indians ; or the Civil Surgeons

¹ ' A Canoe in Lithuania,' by Major Raven-Hart appeared in *Cornhill* in January, 1937, and ' A Canoe in Florida,' in February, 1938.

almost always Indians or Anglo-Indians (out of ten I met, nine were one or the other—the tenth was, I think, British). Height of absurdity, when a school is supposed to teach English to Burmese boys, must the only suitable principal be an Indian, whose mother-tongue is neither the one nor the other ?

That Indians dominate the retail commerce of Burma is the fault of the Burmese : that they so largely dominate the subordinate Civil Service is partly the fault of the Burmese, but largely also of the Indian Administration. Whatever the causes, the result is that there is growing up among the Burmans a hatred of Indians which may have terrible results : already in the Rebellion of 1930-1 the enemy, the *naga*-serpent, the foreign snake which was to be crushed by the Burmese *galon*-griffin and tiger, was less a representation of the British authorities than of the Indian intruders.

Someone (I was never able to trace the source and make due acknowledgment) has said that the Burmese are ‘ the Irish of the East.’ Anyone who visits Ireland is bound to like the easy-going, friendly, happy Irishman : anyone who visits Burma is bound to like the Burmese. Whether the first impression persists when they have to be met for years as colleagues, subordinates, business associates is less certain—in both cases.

At any rate, superficially they are charming ; and such superficial charm is all a tourist needs. I saw much of them : I slept as a rule in villages, at Government bungalows or Headmen’s houses, and lived ‘ on the country ’ : rice and vegetable-stews on the upper river, rice and vegetable-curries lower down, and as drink the safe sugarless and milkless, pale topaz tea. Everywhere people were friendly, charming : all I can reproach them with is their inquisitiveness, and even this is not at all the monkey-like curiosity of

many countries, questions asked merely for the sake of asking them, but rather the intelligent interest of an intelligent small boy. The boat, a canvas-and-rubber collapsible of kayak shape, was of course of huge interest to these river-minded people, who swim literally before they walk; but even more than the boat did the double-ended paddles fascinate them as an entire and very practical novelty. Almost everywhere I had to demonstrate the stroke to them, and how much more efficient it was than their single-bladed paddle (such as we associate with the Canadian canoe): at one village there was awaiting me next morning a youngster propelling a dug-out with a double paddle extemporised overnight from a bamboo and bits of packing-cases, and demanding that I should commend or correct his style.

And another advantage of their inquisitiveness is that it breaks the ice. When you have answered a few dozen questions—where you started the trip, and where it is going to end, and how old you are (an invariable query, its omission almost an insult), and what the boat is made of, and what it cost—they cannot, and do not, object to a few dozen questions being asked in return. What it costs to build a house, for instance: £50 will give you a really swagger one, half of that will suffice, tree-trunk corner-poles and bamboo rafters, plank floor raised on stilts five feet or so from the ground, matting walls, a grass thatch—all such suitable material that one feels as if the houses had grown up with the forest around them. Or whether they fish with cast-net; or the huge dip-net, fifteen feet and more square, on bamboo frames raised and lowered by bamboo derricks; or in a few places with the really curious contrivance of glossy white boards set sloping down from the gunwales into the water, so that the fish take them for moonlight and jump aboard by dozens. Or why there is a *nat*-spirit shrine

on the shore, a little doll's-house complete with verandah and stairway up to it, with a few offered fruits or flowers inside : maybe he claims a yearly victim by drowning unless thus propitiated ; or maybe he governs a whirlpool, and the only way to get safely through it is by steering for his house in salutation and turning out at the last moment only, a neat combination of leading-mark and superstition ; or maybe he is there just because he has always been there.

Needless to say, my own knowledge of Burmese did not suffice to answer their questions or to ask my own : I did get one Burmese word thoroughly into my head, 'U,' one of the shortest words in the language. It is a useful word, too : it means an egg, or the bow of a boat, or an uncle (a title of respect for older men), or a cape or headland, or one's intestines, according to how you pronounce it. The trouble was that I could only pronounce it in one way, and my way did not seem to mean any of those things.

But I had with me companions who could talk for me : a Kachin schoolboy of fourteen for the first part, and then a Burmese youngster. They were excellent companions, both of them, and picturesque figures with their squarely-modelled, strong bare brown torsos : the schoolboy wore baggy black cotton trousers, cut apparently to fit a baby elephant, and the older lad a pink cotton skirt to his ankles. Both had hideous but necessary Chinese-made felt hats against the sun : the Burman sins against his traditional dress rarely except in headgear, such hats as these, or uproarious cloth caps, or (unexpectedly) woollen Balaclava helmets.

We made as a rule short runs, so as to have time at our daily destinations to see things and meet people. Local legends were a frequent topic on those evenings, sleepily, sun-dazedly smoking after large and welcome meals. And

such legends abound in Burma—there are were-tigers with six claws on each foot ; and men who are not really human, detected because they hold their thumbs inside their fists ; and witches that turn into rolling luminous balls ; and of course *nats* by myriads. The jungle is their special domain—rivers also, and mountains often, but always the forests ; and all hunters, Burmese or European, respect them. No shoot begins without the guns being leaned up against the trunk of a *nat*-tree and food and drink placed below (and later removed and eaten by the hunters, the offer sufficing) : at any rate, no successful shoot. And the first bird or animal shot must ‘ baptise ’ the gun with a drop of its blood on the barrel ; but on the other hand, a gun is ruined with which a monkey has been shot, by accident as a rule, or to drink the blood of the still-living animal as an unfailing rejuvenator.

Older weapons persist also. There is a powerful cross-bow, so powerful that leg-leverage is needed to bend it, shooting light arrows ‘ feathered ’ with palm-leaves with force enough to bring down large birds ; and there is also an amusing light bow, double-stringed, shooting pellets of dried mud from a pocket lying across the two strings. I say ‘ amusing ’ because I tried one, after its small-boy owner had four times missed a jay which was flying about like an escaped firework : I hit my left thumb-nail three times with it, and it gave great pleasure to the onlookers.

That is another pleasant characteristic of the Burmese : they laugh readily, in amusement at you or at themselves, but you never feel that it is a contemptuous laugh. A smile is a passport in Burma : over and over again when I smiled at some urchin, irresistible in scanty skirt and perky topknot, he came at once to me, and grinned confidently up into my face, and babbled unintelligibly to his new-found friend. The older people are equally ready to be friendly,

and are hospitable in the extreme : I was continually being invited—to sit and rest, to drink tea, even to take a few puffs at a family cheroot, the huge Burmese affair that is passed from smoker to smoker, a foot long and an inch in diameter, wrapped in maize-leaf and tasting as if stuffed with dried hay. And either the Europeans have been infected or else the Government and the big trading Companies send to Burma only hospitable, helpful people.

My cruise began at Myitkyina, well above steamer-navigation, and thus included the 'first defile' which the steamer-tourist misses, a Dürer-landscape of fierce, bare rocks all across the river, stove-polished as on Nile and Amazon, and grudgingly conceding a bare passage at the last moment : thanks to the absence of current in low water there was no danger, despite terrifying warnings of well-meaning friends. It included also the 'second defile,' with the eight-hundred feet sheer cliff that looms over a perky white and gold pagoda : pagodas are the great feature of Burmese scenery, perched like impudent sparrows on over-awing precipices and refusing to be intimidated, or dotted like exclamation-marks just where needed to call attention to an outstanding bluff or bend or peak.

Apart from the defiles, and the almost constant distant hills, the river is, frankly, dull, with low shores and sandbanks and little current. Still, those sandbanks gave excellent camp-sites (except when they had tiger-tracks on them) and good bathing, in the cold, jade-green, jade-translucent water which clouded only slowly in my six hundred miles to Chouk. It was not the river itself, it was the towns and villages that made the cruise unforgettable : Tagaung, once capital of Burma, with an incongruously Polynesian *nat* in his two-story house under palms and tamarinds ; Bhamo, more Chinese than Burman ; Mya-daung, where

I ate peacock for Christmas turkey (and spent Boxing Day in bed with indigestion, traditionally) ; Sagaing, peppered with pagodas and stretched out in the sun like a sleepy cat ; Moda, one long street lined with tall palm-trunks at all angles, the sunlight sliding like butter through them ; Shwegu, where they make pleasant brown pottery under the houses ; and more and more. Mandalay itself, of course ; but Mandalay is not really a river town, its shore a squalid muddle, its streets shabby—it is a completely negligible place, quickly forgotten apart from the palace (a challenge to all our ideas of æsthetics, looking-glasses and tinsel refusing to be tawdry) and the Arakan pagoda (with stalls selling everything fascinating, above all, toys for children that I had to buy if only to give away and photograph, with their overwhelmed new owners). Pagan on the other hand—but it would take pages to talk about Pagan, once a city as large as the County of London, to-day with over five thousand pagodas or pagoda-ruins, many of them with brickwork never excelled in the world and rarely equalled ; and dating from before the Norman conquest.

But, after all, what makes me want to go back to Burma (yes, there are plenty of other rivers to do) is not those towns, nor the superb moments of scenery, nor the perfect weather, but the people themselves. There is no need to drink Irrawaddy water or throw coins into a Trevi-fountain : Burma is the Burmans, and the memory of them will suffice to force your return.

‘MOBY.’¹

BY THURSTAN TOPHAM.

HE was not known as Moby to begin with, or for many seasons. At first he was just one more ordinary little troutlet, indistinguishable by any peculiarity from the rest of his few hundred brothers and sisters, all hatched from the same lot of brown trout eggs that had been sent to a private Quebec lake, the owner of which, a keen fisherman and conservationist, wishes to stock experimentally with brown trout.

When he hatched out he was an odd, deformed-looking creature, carrying attached to him a great underslung bulging bag, the umbilical vesicle, or yolk-sac, that nourishes the tiny trout until they have grown strong enough to hunt and eat the animalculæ that are their first natural food. During the few weeks that elapsed before his yolk-sac had absorbed, he was a very delicate and helpless thing indeed, moving but little, and awkwardly. Numbers of his companions died at this critical stage, when they are so sensitive to injury, but he managed to survive the precarious period and at last found himself, with many others, able to swim easily around the carefully covered tank in which they had been placed.

Each day he grew stronger and more active, and by the time he was three-quarters of an inch long would worry at a drowned midge, or a tiny shred of liver with the best.

Then the young brown trout were removed to a larger

¹ Regular readers of CORNHILL may remember the account of the home of ‘Moby,’ published under the title ‘On a Canadian River,’ in March 1935.

protected rearing-pool constructed in the bed of a streamlet. Here a considerable amount of natural food was allowed to wash in, besides the liver and dry food that was supplied. Moby thrived wonderfully as did most of the trout, for the water temperature and conditions were excellent.

The Owner, who was away, sent orders in July for his trout to be liberated. They now averaged from three to four inches long. The man who received the order was a not particularly bright French-Canadian guide and he made a slight error in carrying it out. His instructions ran that the trout were to be planted in the stream that emptied from the lake. There was a high log dam in the stream, not far from the lake, and the man put the trout in below the dam. Great was the wrath of the Owner when this was found out. There were bass in the stream below the dam.

This fact Moby soon discovered. He was overawed by the size of the big stream at first, and stayed for a while on the rim of the shallows where he had been turned loose with his fellows. But growing bolder, he joined an exploring party, being of an inquiring nature even at that early date. The little trout swam in a group until they were at a point where the shallow abruptly deepened. Here they loitered, turning and darting half-timidly about. Suddenly something rushed upward from the deeper water beneath them, a huge and terrifying fury. It was only a small six-ounce bass, but to Moby it seemed a gigantic monster. He dashed impulsively for shallow water and from the corner of his wide-angled eye he caught a glimpse of quick tragedy. The bass had seized in its jaws one of the trout that had swum beside him. Moby hid in the shadow of a pebble, motionless. So this was the world. You ate or you were eaten. Moby determined to eat.

He was always hungry, always nosing about for tiny

larvæ. Soon he forgot about the bass, though he instinctively stayed in the shallows. But a great water-bird scared him away, its beak striking so close as to brush his back as he shot away for safety into the deeps. He dodged another young bass which pursued him as he flickered downstream, and finally eluded it by entering a narrow vertical cleft in a rock. The cleft was too narrow for the bass to enter, luckily for Moby, whose tail was tingling. The bass stayed by the crack, eying him hungrily for some moments, then darted off after a minnow. Moby began to nibble at the larvæ that clung on the rock. He swam up the current that passed through the cleft and thus came to the other side of the rock. Here was a small enclosed pool, about a foot deep and a couple of yards long. A miniature waterfall splashed into its upper end, running out again through the cleft by which he had entered. He explored the pool in short furtive dashes, nibbling all the time. No other living creature of anything like his own size appeared to exist in the pool, except a pair of crawfishes which he eyed with some respect, because they were savage, ugly-looking things. But after he had watched them warily for a time he ceased to bother much about them. They swam backwards in a ridiculous fashion and seemed to be completely occupied in busily grubbing about the silt.

He mostly lay invisible below the hollow rock, ready to dart out and seize on tit-bits that were washed over the fall. The morning after his arrival an earthworm flopped over, dropped just before from the beak of a flying blackbird. It sprawled and writhed on the floor of the pool, very large and obvious. Moby gazed at it fearfully for a few seconds, then slowly finned himself nearer to observe it more closely, but ready to dash away if it appeared to be dangerous.

It was a great deal longer than himself, certainly ; but it

looked—yes—it did look remarkably like food. That pink waving tail . . . He flashed in and nipped it with his tiny teeth. It was food ! It was *grand* food !

He worried away at the tail, and the worm squirmed frantically. But like a bull-dog Moby held on, tugging and chewing until he had bitten off a piece of the worm. This he hurriedly bolted, then dashed in again for another hold, now farther down the length of the worm, which tried to throw a coil round him in its despair. But he was now devoid of fear and gnawed away until the doomed worm had lost a further length. This longer piece he swam away with, to swallow bit by bit, but soon he came back with a morsel of worm still sticking from his mouth. It vanished as he gulped and made a greedy rush for the remainder. In a remarkably short time there was no more worm and Moby retired to digest his meal.

Henceforward, no worm that ever dropped into that pool remained uneaten for more than a few minutes. Moby pounced on them all like a flash. The only thing he may have thought was that they were too infrequent. But larvæ and caddis abounded, spiders, ants and flies of various species obligingly fell into the pool, and Moby waxed fat on them all. He was happy as he sensed life and strength surging within him.

One evening after rain, when the water was somewhat higher than usual, a heavy splash startled him. He was dismayed to see that another fish, a huge monster of nearly half a pound, had arrived by way of the fall. A nasty-looking fellow too, black-backed, with a grey-white belly, and wearing an appalling row of fleshy whiskers round his wide, ugly slit of a mouth. It was in fact a 'barbotte,' or bull-pout,¹ and Moby stayed cautiously hidden beneath his

¹ Common freshwater catfish, abundant in most Quebec waters. A very ugly fish.

rock, staring at him. The new-comer waved his feelers before his mouth in an ominous manner, and gradually edged himself nearer to Moby's hiding-place.

Looking him carefully over, Moby at last decided he was perhaps not so dangerous, after all. He did not appear able to swim very fast, by the build of him. His slow, insidious approach, however, made Moby a little uneasy. It might be better to avoid him, as would not be difficult, until he were sure. Moby swam easily out from his rock to the other end of the pool and began to search for food again.

What was that? A worm? Indeed, a worm; after the rain he might expect several. He swam quickly towards it, seized it. A fine big worm. As he was chewing on its tail he suddenly became aware of the barbotte making swiftly at him, open-mouthed. He let go the worm and flashed away. The barbotte engulfed the worm, which vanished like a rope slipping down a well; moved its jaws about greedily, as if smacking its gristly lips, and swam towards Moby.

Moby knew now that the barbotte would swallow him too if it could catch him. The pool was safe no longer. He darted towards the cleft by which he had originally entered, and slipped between the boulders. He had actually grown so much that he could barely pass through. Now he was in the main stream again and must find another home.

Somehow, by instinct and luck combined, he avoided the many hazards that beset a young trout trying to grow up in a world of adversaries, and arrived, as darkness fell, at the mouth of a tiny tributary stream. It was but a rivulet, and into it he impulsively turned. Upstream he swam, wriggling and splashing riskily over shallows, skirting swiftly around the deeper pools wherein an enemy might lurk unseen, until the stream had shrunk to a mere runlet,

overhung with meadow grasses that almost hid it from view. Clumps of alders grew along it here and there, and thrust their roots into its coolness. Under a tangle of these alder roots Moby rested at last, and here he remained for a long period, living well on the food that the rivulet supplied him with in abundance. He had reached a true sanctuary.

Even so, he barely escaped death on two occasions during his stay in the rivulet. The first time was from the bill of a heron that came there to hunt frogs and minnows; the second, from the hook that a farmer's boy dangled, worm-laden, before his nose one day. Luckily he had snapped at the loose end of the worm and he fell back as the boy pulled him up. The boy would have killed him, tiny and undersized as he was.

Shyness and caution were inborn in him, as in all brown trout, and with each new day he learned to be more wary. A moving shadow forever sent him darting into cover. The musk-rats that lived along the rivulet terrified him, and at first he fled in panic when they wandered through the muddy shallows, or swam through his pool, but finding they had no evil designs on him he became accustomed to their splashings, and simply avoided them. He grew rapidly, always, but as winter approached, some inner impulse bade him seek deep water where ice would not hold him in its iron grip.

So he sought the main stream again, one night when a late thunderstorm had swollen the waters of his refuge, and passed like a ghost, flitting downstream in quick darts of speed to a quiet deep pool where he met others of his kind that nature had urged, like himself, to prepare for winter.

In what manner he passed the long cold months of the Canadian winter lies somewhat of a mystery, that writers and students of natural history can but guess at. Probably

for the most part he lay half dormant and obscure at the bottom of a pool, under the shelter of a sunken log or stone. There was little food to be had, and though he had attained a length of six inches when the winter began, he grew little, if at all, during this hibernation.

But with the coming of spring, when the snows of winter melted and the long ice-bound waters swelled and surged in yellow flood, he woke and exulted in the earth's rebirth. His colouring became more silvery and he began to lose the faint barred markings that had earlier shown on his red-spotted flanks. Again for a while he found shelter in a smaller tributary, being not yet large or strong enough to withstand the mighty currents that swept the main stream, wrenching trees from its borders in a torrent of reckless energy, and scouring out sand-bars in frothing spume.

But as the spring floods subsided, he followed the receding waters, hungry as a famished wolf. Beetles and caddis-worms, ants and grubs were his prey until the sun's increasing strength began to bring forth insect life in full abundance. Now he feasted regally and put on weight in amazing fashion, so that soon he weighed a quarter of a pound, slightly better than normal. This was largely because he had been lucky in finding plenty of food early in life. He was now pouncing on baby minnows occasionally, and in the warm late spring evenings would often find a hatch of flies, and stay with it, eating greedily until his small stomach was distended. But his digestion was rapid and he was always ready for more. One night he sucked down a particularly attractive looking blue dun and was startled to receive an immediate sharp blow in his lower jaw.

He had taken a fisherman's dry fly, and was ignominiously hauled, kicking and flapping, from the stream, to be dropped on the grassy bank. Happily for him, the fisherman who

had plucked him from the water was his original Owner, though naturally Moby knew nothing of that. All he was aware of was being shaken gently from the tiny hook and dropped back in the stream, where he darted, terrified, to a dark patch of weeds, beneath which he hid, trembling. The Owner, however, was pleased. He knew now that at least one of his brown trout had survived.

That early taste of the hook served Moby well. From henceforth he carefully observed every fly before rising to it, and he was not hooked again for two years. In the meantime he dodged the bass, though now the smaller ones did not bother him. He grew big enough to defend himself against them, and became expert at disappearing when larger ones came in view. His eyes, wide-angled and never closed, took in objects behind him as well as in front.

So passed the summer, and with the fall Moby became aware of strange impulses that urged him to follow other trout. For there were other brown trout who had survived with him in the river. The eternal life-force was beginning to wake in him. His lower jaw grew slightly hooked, and he ranged upstream at the mysterious demand of sex, fighting queer battles with other males who followed the ascending females up tributary brooks, seeking, they knew not why, the gravelly bottoms in the currents that would wash their eggs and keep them alive. But Moby's selected mate, an immature young trout, was seized by a fish-seeking bear as she splashed before him up a shallow run in the brook, and Moby found no other mate that season.

Again the weary winter came, and passed. By late spring Moby was a well-grown, handsome fish of nearly a pound, and had put on stronger colours. His back and flanks were mottled richly with spots of purple-brown over the general deep ochre hue of his body, and along each side

he bore an uneven row of coral-red marks, as though a small paint-stained finger had touched him lightly here and there. He was the biggest of all the brown trout that were his fellow-colonists in the river, and few bass were large enough to annoy him now.

That summer was a long and warm one, and Moby revelled in it. Huge hatches of flies and insects followed each other right on from early spring, and there is nothing like an unlimited supply of insect food and warm weather to make a trout grow quickly. Moby also developed a taste for young crawfish. The old ones were yet too tough for him, though if he could find one that had just cast its horny shell he would make short work of it. In the hot dazzling sunlight hours he lay usually in deep cool water waiting for the evening shadows to fall over the river, but as night drew near, he would drift from his nook and cruise the stream until he found a hatch of flies on which he would feed, carefully but steadily. Darkness did not halt him, if anything he was more active then than in daylight. His sense of smell was acute; he knew not only the smell of food but also of inanimate forms such as rocks, stones and logs. His lateral line and the red spots near it, highly organised nerve-centres, served him as ears, conveying vibrations to his brain automatically.

He loved the pale light that the moon shed, and filtering unevenly through the spruce and balsam and birch, wove odd shadow patterns over the water. On such nights he would jump for the white millers that drifted overhead. But if a vee-shaped moving angle appeared on the surface to betray the spot where some otter or mink were swimming, he would sink to the floor of the pool, or steal like a shadow to the dark hollow beneath a sunken boulder, lying motionless but alert until assured of safety.

Sometimes when the midsummer sun beat vertically down and the water temperature rose high, he would leave the deeps and hang in the sweep of a foaming rapid. He knew how to find the spots where a sudden drop in the rock surface created a back-current that would sustain him against the swift downward rush of water. Here he would lie, enjoying sensuously the faint tickle of the driven air bubbles as they brushed him in passing, and revelling in the exhilaration of the oxygen-impregnated water.

Roving one night down-river in late summer, he entered the small overflow-stream that ran behind a dam and saw-mill. It joined the main river again two or three hundred yards below. Only the upper portion of it was artificial, having been cut to form a junction with the ancient deep-hollowed ravine of an almost dried-up brooklet. The old brook-bed was full of great rounded, moss-grown boulders and arched over with spreading tree-branches through which the sun's rays could barely penetrate, making it seem like a cool green cave. There was one good sized pool in it of two feet in depth. Here also a spring gurgled from the bank and added its cold clear flow to the stream.

The small children of the miller had made a tiny path down to the pool. They found it a pleasant spot in the summer's heat, and hidden near the cold spring they kept a little wooden cup that they had hollowed out from a maple-burl. Here they would come to sip the delicious ice-cold water and paddle in the pool, or make miniature dams such as all children love to build.

Moby had worked his way downstream during the night until he had reached this pool. It was cold and refreshing to him, and fat caterpillars fell into it from the leaves overhead. Also the stream abounded with tiny crawfish. So he had remained in the pool, relishing its lower temperature,

and when the children strayed down from the mill-house next morning he was still lying there in the shade of a boulder. The elder boy, a six-year-old, suddenly spotted him, and gave a shriek of joy at the discovery, pointing him out to his younger brother. They made immediate plans for his capture; the younger lad was despatched on a run to fetch a fishing-line, while the other kept watch to see that Moby did not escape.

The fish-line, a coarse affair of thick watercord with a large hook attached, was awkwardly baited with a fat earth-worm and lowered hopefully in front of Moby's nose. Moby felt alarm and annoyance, and backed away from it. There was no way of leaving the pool without exposing himself to danger. Above lay a swift pebbly run, studded with small round boulders, below was a shallow bar of shingle and sand extending several yards, before the water became deep enough again to allow him swimming room. The pool itself was hardly more than six feet in total length, and all Moby could do was to dodge in it from one rock to another.

The boys soon got weary of tempting Moby with the worm, realising the futility of their efforts. Another trip to the house produced a dilapidated old landing net, bequeathed to the children by some well-meaning fisherman. Direct action with the net suited their temperament much better, and Moby was sore beset, though he still eluded them. At last they hit on a more stealthily plan. The younger held the net still on the bottom while his brother poked at Moby with a stick, trying to steer him over the net.

The scheme worked finally, and Moby, panic-stricken, was raised from the pool. Death was never nearer him than at this moment. Then the boys laid the net down to

grasp their prize. A small brown hand closed around him and lifted him from the net. He squirmed, frantically lashing his tail. He began to slip slowly through those squeezing fingers; his thin covering of slime aiding him. Then, unexpectedly, he had dropped, with a jar that shook his whole frame, to the edge of the brook. He doubled his body convulsively and straightened it like a twanging bow. The resultant jump sent him splashing over the shallow sand-bar. The boys ran after him shouting. He doubled and jumped again; twisting, flapping, wriggling always, frenzied as a mad creature, which indeed he was for the moment. He scraped over the last few inches of the bar and thankfully felt water cover his dorsal fin once more.

Darting, with every fibre tensed, he shot downstream like an arrow. Behind him the children splashed noisily. Suddenly the water became deeper; he dived and knew he had reached the main stream again. He had entered the wide pool at the foot of the rapids below the dam, and rejoiced to feel deep water again over him. He swam straight towards the centre of the pool where a great sunken tree-stump lay, black with age and decay. It had been washed out, years past, during flood-time, roots and all, and now rested, half buried in silt. Under its twisted bulk Moby hid himself.

His body was sore where the boy's fingers had roughly grasped him, and much of the slime had been rubbed from his body. This slime acts as a protection for the trout against parasites and fish fungus. Moby felt sick and frightened. He cowered in his dark retreat until nightfall. Then he smelled the strong scent of a mink and slipped away like a shadow, to a hollow beneath a massive lichen-clad rock-face, where great ferns dabbled their long green fronds in the twisting current.

Here he lurked for some days until nature had repaired the slime-coat on his body, and his stiff muscles no longer troubled him. Later, in the big pool he met and remained near another trout that had descended the brook or shot the dam ; a three-quarter-pound female. She was beginning to sense the seasonal urge to ascend the stream ; the slowly forming eggs that pulsed within her body were sending their message to her subconscious brain. A week of heavy autumnal rains swelled the low water that confined her to the pool. The brook through which Moby had passed became a torrent, though still an easier climb than that of the main rapids, which had they attempted would have ended fruitlessly for them at the dam.

They fought their way up the brook, she doggedly, Moby exultantly ; leaping the short falls over the rock-ledges, resting in the lee of small boulders, until they had attained the river's deeps at the head of the dam. Each day they were farther upstream, and nights of frost which dyed the maples scarlet, hastened them on still farther. Another male tried persistently to join them, but Moby finally drove him off, biting angrily at him with his hooked lower jaw until he left them in peace. Other small males appeared and hovered near them occasionally, but Moby's size kept them at a distance.

The female turned eventually from the river into a side-stream, and at last, heavy with her ripened eggs, she chose her spawning bed of clean sandy gravel. With her broad outspread tail she fanned and shovelled the gravel until the result pleased her, then turning on her side she began to lay.

The scent of the eggs drove Moby into a wild ecstasy of madness. He cared nothing for enemies or dangers ; the eggs, the eggs only, filled his world. Three days they passed on the spawning bed, where his fertilising milt

quicken the tiny globes. Later, he drove away his weakened mate when she would have devoured them in her hunger, and kept jealous guard until hunger in turn made him forget them. Not that he would have eaten the precious eggs ; the strange inscrutable laws of the universal Giver of life withheld him and made him their fierce guardian while he remained near them.

But hunger drove at last, and he forgot them, as all creatures of the wild seem to forget things. The winter came again, spring followed, and Moby hunted the river, a full two-pounder. Now he feared only the larger birds, the bitterns, hawks, and herons, and the animals of prey that ranged the river. All summer he hunted and added to his weight. In the following autumn a lynx almost scooped him in one night, slapping its wicked paw down from the over-hanging branch on which it crouched, and cruelly scarring his broad back. From this escape he learned to avoid swimming near the surface under low-hanging trees, but the slow-healing wound left a lighter-coloured scar ever afterwards, from which he was soon to gain his nickname.

Early in the next spring he was hooked again, and put up a wild fight for five minutes, until a sudden plunge as the landing-net slid towards him broke the slight hold of the fly hook and he found himself free once more.

The fisherman, a friend of the Owner, had seen the scar on his shoulder, however, and christened him 'Moby Dick' after the fabulous whale, under which name he rapidly gained a reputation. When he had broken free he plunged to the bottom of a deep rock-littered pool and sulked with his stiff jaw until midnight. Then he swam furtively out and ranged the depths of the pool savagely, hunting young crawfish.

Flies, his instinct told him, could be dangerous and might be connected with the strange two-legged creatures that occasionally roved the banks or waded in the stream. He was fond of flies—dragon-flies, stone-flies and May-flies particularly. He liked to feed quietly and steadily on them, when a hatch was coming out ; but they must look and smell right. He would rise gently at a floating fly, cautiously inhaling the water through his tiny sensitive nostrils as he approached, and if the right smell were missing he would swerve deftly aside, and a disappointed fisherman would mutter strange words to himself.

He loved to jump, to fling himself high from the water for the sheer surging joy of life that was in him. He would jump with snapping jaws at a bright butterfly hovering two feet over the surface ; or at a young fledgeling bird, fluttering clumsily on its first flight. On moonlight nights, when huge grey moths winged over the shining river, a great splash would betray his exultant form gleaming momentarily in the air like a silver bar. But for all this he was not hooked again that year.

As he grew older he became increasingly carnivorous, feeding more and more on crawfish and minnows. Many a young field-mouse vanished with a sudden swirl into his capacious sharp-toothed jaws, and once he pulled down a bat that skimmed the water over his pool. This he did not eat, but tousled it about in sheer wantonness, leaving its bitten carcass to wash up on a sand-bar next morning. The crawfish finished it.

Advancing age and weight made him more set in his habits, as is the case with all creatures, human or otherwise. When he had reached a weight of over four pounds he adopted a favourite pool in the river, between two sets of rapids. At the top end the Owner had built a small

electric power-house to supply his estate. A flume led to it from the dam at the head of the upper rapids. The pool itself was about a hundred and fifty yards in length, and was dotted, especially at its lower end where the rapids began again, with round-topped boulders, rubbed smooth on by-gone glaciers. In the very centre of the pool, where the water was eight feet deep, a single rock pushed its nose above the surface.

The power-house had a small window overlooking his pool, and the man who came to tend the power-plant often saw Moby when he leaped. Occasionally he would stealthily lower a night-line baited with fat lobworms ; but Moby was too wise and cautious for him and would nip the loose wriggling ends off the worms very neatly without touching the hook. At last the man told about the big trout to his employer, the Owner, who came and tempted Moby with artful flies, but had little success ; neither he nor the friends he often brought with him, though they tried persistently.

Once, indeed, Moby rose to a floating cork-bodied May-fly but broke away by sheer weight at the very instant of the strike.

Finally, late one summer evening during a light shower of rain, the Owner hooked him on a silver-bodied streamer fly that looked like a minnow. He called excitedly to his friend, 'I've got Moby on at last.'

This time Moby had to fight. He darted like a torpedo to the foot of the pool as the tight line behind him cut the water-surface with a hiss. He had thought to dash down the lower rapids, but the steady strain of the bent rod made him turn aside and kept him from the main current that would have helped him. He paused a moment to gather strength, angrily shaking his head and pushing with his tough tongue at the hook in his jaw, trying to work it

loose. But the Owner kept his line taut and Moby could not get his tongue under the bend of the hook. He sensed himself being slowly towed across the pool, shoreward, and made an abrupt rush upstream, trying to get slack line. The Owner was wise, and his rod-tip went up as he reeled quickly. Moby could not gain the loose line he wanted. Still he was not yet really afraid—somehow, he felt, he would surely get rid of that strain on his jaw.

Suddenly he was aware of the landing net as it lay under water just ahead. A vision came to him, dim, but not forgotten—of the children's net that had once closed round him long ago in the mill-flow. A mad panic awoke in him. He twisted, swerving and straining with every muscle in his lithe body working, and made a dash for the rock that lay in the centre of the pool. Now he knew fear; and fear gave him added strength. The rock grew close, only a couple of feet from him now, but the strain on him was telling. He rose towards the surface, gaining a little line thereby. He broke water, wallowing, and lashing his broad tail. The Owner was afraid of losing him and relaxed the strain slightly. It was just enough; Moby dived once more and hugged the rock round which he managed to turn.

The line now lay partly against the rock, which thus took some of the pull. Moby panted, his gill-covers opening and shutting rapidly. Inch by inch, he worked farther along the rock, round the curve of which the line was snubbed, and the strain on him eased proportionately.

The Owner knew what had happened, and tried to scare Moby from his temporary refuge by tapping the butt of his rod to send vibrations through the line. Moby hated that, but stayed grimly where he was. He must regain strength and wind before moving. At intervals he slapped

at the leader with his tail, trying to break it from the hold on his jaw, but it was difficult to hit. He rubbed the hook against a jagged edge of rock without loosening it. Time dragged on.

The owner grew impatient. He knew Moby was on the far side of the rock and still hooked, for he could feel a heavy twitch on his line now and then. But it was fast growing dark, and after dark he would have less chance than ever of landing the fish. He conferred with his friend, and decided he would work upstream to a point where he could wade across the rapids at the base of the power-house. Having then arrived at the same side of the rock as Moby he would loosen line and attempt to throw a loose loop over the low top of the rock, thereby getting a direct pull on the fish again. It was a good idea if it would work.

Moby lay quiet, though his strength had greatly revived. He tugged, once in a while, at the line, but there was no slack forthcoming. Then quite abruptly the strain relaxed. The Owner had crossed the stream and loosened his line so as to throw the loop. But Moby lost no time. As he felt the pull vanish he shot downstream, planing surface-ward at the same moment. There was a fountain of flying spray as he jumped. The line jarred as Moby descended on it at its instant of tightening. The leader snapped and Moby leaped a second time, triumphant in his sudden freedom. Afterwards, at supper, the Owner swore that Moby had come up again to laugh at him.

His fame increased and spread among fishermen, but he was wiser and more cunning than ever, after this last narrow escape. Hooked he was, it must be admitted, at rare intervals, but always on the finest of gut, which he broke every time. Those who used thick gut never rose him and only wasted their efforts.

Strange and weird legends of the Paul Bunyan ¹ type have arisen, glorifying his size and prowess ; such as that his favourite den is up the flume, the interior walls of which he has tastefully decorated with dry flies ; that he will swim below the power-house window on starry nights and growl there ; that he has sprouted a pair of horns wherewith he hunts and gores large bass ; that if you fall into the power-house pool Moby will 'get' you.

But he is still there—more than a mere legend. The power-house pool is 'Moby's Pool' to all the fishermen who know that river. It is customary to throw a fly over the pool, but more as a respectful gesture of salutation to an honourable foe than with any real hope of rising him.

To-day he must be all of eight pounds. One wonders sometimes as to what his ultimate fate may be and likes fervently to hope that rather than ending in the savage clutch of some prowling bear, or slowly giving way to the infirmities of age and perishing miserably, to be washed up and devoured by wretched scavenging birds, that he will eventually die in gallant battle at the end of a good fisherman's line. Moby ! I drink your Health.

Montreal.

¹ A mythical lumberjack hero whose fabulous accomplishments out-rival the exploits of Hercules.

THE SHADOW OF THE GATES.

BY W. A. BREYFOGLE.

THE ship that should have waited at Pydna had sailed without him. For the first time in thirty years, Ephialtes made up his mind to journey overland to Athens. All the way through Thessaly he told himself there was no danger. He need not stop. He was as safe in Greece, after all these years, as in Macedonia. But none of his reasonings helped him when he crossed the border into Malis. When he lifted his eyes, late one afternoon, and saw Thermopylæ standing over him, his heart hammered in his breast like a girl's.

It was not all fear. Ephialtes was coming home. From the highest point of the pass he could see the roofs of the village beneath him, a long way off. His knees shook and he had to sit down. Thirty years? It might have been no more than a day. The great shadow of the hills crept over the village, as he remembered it creeping in his boyhood. Suddenly he didn't care that Ariston was waiting for him in Athens. Ariston and Athens, Macedonia and the tribes receded in his mind to phantoms he might have dreamed. Nothing was real but the roofs of Malis, the quiet fields there and his own great longing for them.

He sat for a long time, until the tumult within him subsided a little. There was only an hour of daylight left, and he was far from any shelter. Unless—— He turned the idea over in his mind. A day earlier, he would not have entertained it for a moment. But now he scarcely hesitated. His eyes were very bright. There was an inn in the village. He would spend the night there,

It was more tavern than inn. The host, Timoleon, was greatly pleased to have a traveller put up there for the night. 'You would think, with the pass so near, that we'd get a good many. But they go by. Nothing happens in Malis. Your first time here?'

Ephialtes nodded, without changing expression. 'I'm from Athens. Ariston is my name, the son of Polycleitus.'

'From Athens!' said the inn-keeper, on a note of respect.

Ephialtes tilted his cup, watching the wine in it lap up towards the brim. 'To be frank, I thought of going on past myself. But the pass up there set me thinking. Everyone's heard about the great fight, the time the Persians came. I was thinking that you people here must know what really happened. You saw it all.'

'I can tell you whatever you want to know. I'm from Locris. It was before I came here, but I've heard the older men speak of it. Once they talked of nothing else. Now, of course, many of them are dead. Thirty years bring changes, even to Malis. Was it about Leonidas you wanted to hear?'

'Well, yes. It has to do with Leonidas. A brave man, and he had a captain's eye. He chose a good position to defend. But what interests me particularly is the rumour I keep hearing. I've heard that he would have held the pass against all the Great King's host, but that he was betrayed. Do you know anything about that?'

'It's true. A man from Malis betrayed him. His name was Ephialtes, the son of Eurydemos.'

He kept his voice casual. 'It's true, then! How did it happen?'

'This Ephialtes was hardly more than a boy. He lived here in the village. But his mother's father had a place up

in the hills, west of the Gates. A charcoal-burner, I've been told. As a boy, Ephialtes was often there. He knew the hills as boys do know them. Well, there's a goat-path of sorts, a mile beyond Thermopylæ, and that was the path he showed to the Persians. Leonidas knew of it, too. He had put an outpost of his Phocian allies there, not really expecting an attack. But it was a wild, wet night when the Persians climbed up—Hydarnes, with the Immortals—and the Phocians fled. In the morning Leonidas found the Persians behind him as well as in front. You know what happened after that.'

'What made Ephialtes do it?'

'I can tell you, though there aren't many who know about it now. There was a farmer, his name was Athenades, and old Eurydemos, Ephialtes' father, owned land next to his holding. There was a dispute about the title to it, and Athenades won, when it came to law. Eurydemos died soon after that, some said, of vexation at the award, and his property passed to Ephialtes. Now the land in dispute was a good field, between the road and the sea. That year it stood deep in heavy-headed grain, and Athenades liked to boast of it. But one night when the grain was ripe and dry, ready for the sickle, Ephialtes set fire to it. He was seen, and he fled northward and fell in with the Persians. He needed money and he knew about the path.'

Ephialtes studied the pattern on his cup. 'Then, if there had never been a dispute about that field, or perhaps if Athenades hadn't boasted of his grain, the Great King might never have passed Thermopylæ?'

'It's true. A queer thing is that Athenades was ruined when he won that award. He had to borrow, the year that his crops were burned. You know what money-lenders are; he never got out of their clutches, especially

after he took to drink. Strange, isn't it? No one profited but Ephialtes, the traitor.'

Ephialtes asked, 'What became of him?'

'I don't know. He was never seen again.'

'Dead, I suppose?'

'Perhaps. But if he's still alive, he's probably a rich man by now, with the money he must have got from the Persians. It wouldn't be hard for him to turn it into more.'

'I've heard that the Amphictyons put a price on his head, as a traitor to every city in Greece. Does that still stand?'

'I suppose so. I never thought of it, it's so long ago. And as you said, the man is probably dead.'

Ephialtes resumed his journey in the morning. In Malis he had seen no one he knew. More important, he had seen no one who knew him. Thirty years had passed, and a great many were dead. Others, like Ephialtes himself, were changed beyond recognition. He was past fifty now, and the beard he had grown in Macedonia was shot with grey. A long scar running across his right cheek-bone had drawn that side of his face out of shape. He was heavier than he had been as a boy, and his years in the north and at Athens had taken from him every vestige of the dialect of Malis. These were the thoughts that beguiled his way southward. And whither they led Ephialtes knew very well.

They led back to Malis, the road above all others that he wanted to take. The time comes when the diversions of a man's youth lose their savour, when he ceases to care for wine and dice and girls. At fifty, however vigorous his health, his thoughts turn to quietness and his own place. Even the Macedonians, even the Epirotes know the tug that draws the wildest tribesman home at last. They are free to go. But Ephialtes thought that the lack of that freedom,

for him, only made Malis twice as dear, doubly sweet because he must steal back to it under a name not his own. Did a man know what was worth his love until he had lost it? He didn't, Ephialtes could tell.

It was dangerous. No one cared about his past in Macedonia. Athens was big, and had other things to think of now than Thermopylæ. In either place he was safe. But Malis had a long memory, and there were men still alive who knew all about the death of Leonidas. Yes, but they would think of a beardless Ephialtes, slender and speaking their own broad dialect, with no disfiguring scar. He could count upon that. Trust him for a story to account for the presence of Ariston of Athens among them! Only make the story gripping enough and they would never see through to the man telling it. But his deliberations yielded more and more to a haunting insistence. He had to go back. There was nothing else worth desiring, nothing but the sea and the sky and the stony earth of Malis. Reasonably, he couldn't account for it. It was beyond reason, as it was beyond his power to resist. He only knew that, asleep or waking, Malis filled his mind. Better to live there, even with a sword above his head, than drag out an empty existence elsewhere. When he reached Athens, he would tell Ariston, whose name he had borrowed, to look for a new partner. Ephialtes would trade to Macedonia and Epirus no more. He was going home.

When he lay on the narrow bed that first night, his dreams were all auspicious. Brief snatches of the old days swam up before his mind, smoke rising in the early morning, the first snow of the year on the hills, the fishing-vessels in the gulf. Deeper in sleep, he met a phantom soldiery, Spartans, by the look of them. They stared at him with eyes grave but not reproachful. Before they passed they raised their

spears in salute. He awoke in the middle of the night with that magnanimous gesture vividly before him. The shades understood. The sound of waves in the gulf filled the room, the many odours of the summer night. It was an end to wandering. When he went down to join the shades himself, let Malis have his bones.

He slept late, weary from long travel. It was a market-day, and the inn was full. But Timoleon came up at once when Ephialtes appeared. 'You slept well? They will bring you the bread and wine. It's an honour for us to have you back.'

The truth was, Timoleon was inordinately curious. What brought the man from Athens back a second time was beyond him. He had a nose for mystery, and an inn-keeper ought to know the categories of men. But this Ariston was something new in Timoleon's experience. He busied himself about the three-legged table set before his guest. 'Just tell me if anything's missing. We live very simply here, not like the places where you've been.'

'Where have I been?'

'Why, Athens! Or in the north.'

'So you knew I'd been in the north?'

'You came down from there, the time before.'

'So I did, on my way to Athens.'

He drummed with his fingers on the table-top. Timoleon would have liked to question him, if he had dared. But then, unexpectedly, he began to talk. Everyone listened to him, quite openly. For some reason that seemed to please him. It was hardly vanity. More likely, he thought to satisfy their curiosity once and for all.

'I'm an Athenian, but I'm not going back there. Nor back to the north, to Macedonia. That's for younger men. It's a hard life, trading with the tribes, half-wild as they are.'

I've got a little money, and I'm tired of travelling. I'm alone in the world, too, free to do as I like. For the present, I thought of stopping here.'

There was a moment's silence. Then an old farmer sitting alone asked, in simple wonder, 'But why don't you go back to your own place?'

Ariston wasn't angry. 'Perhaps a stranger sees more than a native,' he suggested. 'To me, this land here seems a good land. I've seen a good many, but none fairer than Malis.'

They wrinkled their brows. To them, it went without saying that Malis was the fairest of all lands. But that was because it was the land of their birth, the land where their fathers were buried, all that, for example, Athens was to the Athenian-born. Or ought to be. It wasn't a question of comparison and choice, but of piety. What Ariston said about the beauty of Malis was not really relevant.

But, having found his way there, he seemed to intend to stay. In the uniformly fine weather he walked the roads or hired a boatman to take him along the shore. Every evening he sat in the inn and drank the local wine as if he enjoyed it. Mostly he talked with Timoleon. Except on market-days the inn had few patrons. Athenades, the farmer, came more often than that, whenever he had a little money. But Athenades was surly and a drunkard. Timoleon made shift to keep him and the stranger from meeting.

That was not hard, for Timoleon observed that the man from Athens rather avoided company than sought it. When the inn was full he kept out of sight. He seemed to have a curious aversion from the older men of the village. Timoleon had seen him leave the courtyard when two or three of them came in, and retire to his own quarters. With

young men it was different ; he sometimes struck up a conversation.

In fact, for Ephialtes, the first days there swung from happiness to moments of panic. No one knew what his outward calm cost him. Yet how sweet it was to be back in Malis ! The very earth spoke to him, and the full northern summer and the shapes of the hills. Surely it was worth the terror of coming suddenly upon a face he remembered, of steeling himself not to hurry past the slow, keen stare of those old eyes, though he felt them stabbing through him as he went by. He told himself that the very boldness of his return there was his best disguise. No one would look in Malis, in the shadow of Thermopylæ, for the traitor, Ephialtes. He thought of the story he had ready. He knew these people, shrewd in small matters, gullible in anything beyond the limits of their stony fields. They would believe what he meant to tell them.

Timoleon gave him his first chance. ‘ You ought to go up to the Gates,’ the inn-keeper suggested one morning. ‘ That’s worth seeing. I’ll go up with you, if you like. I can tell you all about the fighting there, the time the Persians came.’

It was to Timoleon’s interest that a paying guest should not weary of his stay. He could be trusted to spread any news he heard. When they were out of the village, Ephialtes said, ‘ They came in their hundreds of thousands, I’ve been told. That was the mistake, and the Great King knows it now. Another time, he will send a smaller army, but the very flower of his troops.’

Timoleon was startled. ‘ You think they will come again ?’

Ephialtes shrugged. ‘ It’s common knowledge. They bide their time. We haven’t seen the last of them.’

‘After what Leonidas did to them, with only three hundred men?’

‘They don’t fear another Leonidas. They know that, the next time, Sparta will hold the Isthmus, with Corinth’s help. The Spartans haven’t another three hundred to throw away, for glory but no gain.’

‘But the rest of us! We have no Isthmus to hold.’

‘You have Thermopylæ.’

‘Who’s to man it?’

‘It concerns all Greeks north of the Peloponnese.’

‘Athens, then?’

‘Athens, along with the others.’

The rough, rising ground imposed silence upon them. They were both breathing hard when they reached the highest point, where the heights close in and the road wriggles between them. Timoleon stopped. ‘This is Thermopylæ.’

It was shortness of breath that made him thus laconic, but it had the effect of reverence. They had the place to themselves, and the memory of an old heroism. To the northwest the narrow passage widened and fell away towards open plains. Behind them it widened again, and there was the knoll where Leonidas had made his last stand. The stone lion to his memory crowned the knoll now, watching over the road he had barred against the Great King. The wind that was always stirring in the pass blew about the lion’s lifted head. There was nothing more.

But Timoleon’s thoughts were in the future, not in the past. He said, ‘If you would make a stand north of the Isthmus, Thermopylæ is the only place. More than that, whoever holds the Gates has taken a long step toward hegemony of all northern Greece. Isn’t that right?’

Ephialtes nodded. 'You must hold the Gates, and to do that, you must hold Malis.'

'Then,' said Timoleon triumphantly, 'Athens cannot let another city be before her ! At the worst, she could hold the Gates alone. The sea is hers already.'

Ephialtes said, 'Well ?'

'Well, but time presses ! It isn't to be arranged overnight.'

'Of course not.' He looked away towards the north. 'Be sure that my countrymen know that.'

It worked very well. Timoleon walked home in deep thought. The men of Malis had assumed that Ariston was an exile. But was he ? He didn't carry himself like one. There was nothing in Malis to attract even an exile on his private account. And what had he been doing up in Macedonia, now that Timoleon thought of it that way ? Trading, Ariston said. But suppose—— Suppose that Athens had an eye on Thermopylæ. Then she would consider Macedonia, too. An agreement quietly made would bring the tribes up, when the time came, against the Great King's flank and rear. A task for an able man, working unobtrusively, long before there was any rumour of a new invasion. Timoleon said nothing to his fellow-townsmen. They would not understand. But sometimes he dropped a hint to Ariston himself, and Ariston looked at him and laughed and didn't deny it. He wasn't an exile ; he was one of Athens' many secret agents. And it seemed to the inn-keeper that Ariston was rather pleased than not at having his secret discovered. He must know that he would need a little discreet help, here in Malis. An inn-keeper learns to hold his tongue. Not too rigidly, since people come to an inn, after all, to hear the news. But with a nice judgment. The man from Athens could trust him. Watching him, Ephialtes was satisfied.

Because Timoleon would expect it of him, he returned to the pass several times. And, so that the inn-keeper might know where he had been, Ephialtes questioned him about it when he came back. 'That path the Persians used, to take Leonidas in the rear—how many know about that now?'

Timoleon couldn't say. 'A few days' work would make it impassable,' he suggested.

'Who lives up in the hills now?'

'In the hills?'

'Yes. On Damis's old place, for instance.'

Timoleon stared. 'Who was Damis?'

Ephialtes kept almost all the sudden fear out of his voice. 'That charcoal-burner you told me about. Ephialtes' grandfather.'

'Was that his name?'

'It's what you told me,' said Ephialtes. He must cover up the slip of his tongue, at all costs.

'I told you? But I never knew what he was called!'

Ephialtes tried impatience. 'It doesn't matter. But certainly *I* never knew! Perhaps you had heard it once, and forgotten it until now.'

'That might be.' Timoleon would not argue with a guest for the world. 'Yes, that must be it. Funny, the tricks a man's mind plays!'

'Very funny!' Ephialtes laughed, in a key unintentionally high. He didn't find out who lived on Damis's old place.

He never betrayed himself again. But there were other moments that put his heart in his mouth. Once, just as he was leaving the inn, a scuffle at the gate stopped him. The farmer Athenades was there, the worse for drink. Timoleon's serving-man had refused him entrance, and a crowd collected to enjoy the brawl. Athenades' voice overbore all others. He was shouting something about having his

crops burned, about the blood-sucking money-lenders. There was a moment, before his neighbours carried him off, when he stood staring directly at Ephialtes. With no recognition ! Ephialtes never knew how he had stood his ground. Athenades was drunk, but not past knowing a face he had good cause to remember. Ephialtes would have known him anywhere, the burly figure, the protruding eyes, the harsh voice. The moment passed, and the blood stopped drumming in Ephialtes' ears. It could mean only one thing—he was safe.

To spend his last years in Malis, to be buried in the land of his fathers. He remembered with a kind of horror his flippant acceptance of exile in his youth. Then one part of the world was as good as another, and Malis had never given him cause to love it. But he had seen men die in the far corners of Macedonia and Epirus, and heard the names of their homes on their lips—Pylos, Paros, Thera. As he grew older, he understood them. Those men were not exiles ; they could have gone back, if there had been time. To him the gods had been good—he had come home. Being a childless man, there was nothing more he could ask.

Except a little piece of native earth for his own. The inn was very well. But why shouldn't he buy land and settle down here ? No one knew him. One morning he said to Timoleon, 'I may be here for some time. I thought of buying land. You don't know of any for sale ?'

Timoleon rubbed his chin. 'It's hard to buy land hereabouts. The farms come down from fathers to sons, you see. It's a calamity when a man has to sell.'

Ephialtes knew, as well as the inn-keeper, that this was only the preliminary to long bargaining. Timoleon foresaw a commission. He added at once, 'But I'll keep it in

mind. I'm sure to hear of it, if anyone has land for sale. You'd prefer it in the hills.'

'Not in the hills, no. On the coast.' Eurydemos had never held land in the hills.

For another reason, it was the answer Timoleon had expected. Of course ! A foothold on the coast could be enlarged little by little. What began as a gentleman's estate might come to shelter an Athenian garrison, on guard at the Gates. Athens held the sea, whoever marched against her by land. A private man would choose the hills, for the shore lay open to the hard wind and the waves, and what slope there was faced the north. Timoleon strove to seem innocent of these thoughts. None the less, he treated his guest with great respect.

The same thought was in the back of both their minds. Latterly Ephialtes' afternoon walks took him to a point in the road overlooking part of Athenades' land. It was the field he had won from old Eurydemos, the one where Ephialtes had set fire to the standing grain, a long time ago. Across that field was the sea, and Timoleon thought he knew what was in Ariston's mind when he stood there, staring. Thinking of his commission, Timoleon was pleased. Athenades was always pressed for money. If any land in Malis was for sale, it would be the very plot that Ariston seemed to like best.

He made a point of being attentive to the Athenian. Timoleon himself brought the water for the hand-washing, before the evening meal. That one evening, he pointed suddenly. 'You've hurt your arm. I'll get some oil and a bandage for it.'

Ephialtes looked down, puzzled. 'Oh ! That's a birth-mark. It's all right. Listen a moment. I was thinking this afternoon that your hard-drinking friend, Athenades,

might be willing to sell a field or two. You said he was in debt to the money-lenders.'

The harder the bargain could be made to seem, the better his commission. Timoleon thought it politic to demur. 'I hadn't thought of him. There's a place up in the hills I heard about, facing south, sheltered from the east wind. Just the thing.'

'I daresay. But can you get a plot from Athenades?'

'I can try. He won't want to sell. He holds the land from his fathers.'

Ephialtes looked at him with a smile. 'You are great people for the land of your fathers, aren't you? You must think of exile from Malis as worse than death.'

'Everyone feels that way about his fatherland,' said Timoleon, sure that he would not be contradicted. Then, because he enjoyed this borderland of mystery, he added: 'You do, yourself. When you tire of living abroad, you will go back to your own place. You will end your days where they began.'

The man from Athens wasn't offended. He repeated, 'To my own place!' Then, more briskly, slapping his hand on the table, 'But that field Athenades won from—what was his name?—Eurydemos, that's hardly the land of his fathers. Ask him to sell me that.'

Timoleon appeared to consider this notion, thoroughly familiar to him already. 'You could add to it later, as you needed more land.' He glanced up, but Ariston's face showed no concern at having his secret thoughts read. Timoleon's respect for him grew even greater. He nodded. 'I'll ask him.'

He would have liked to spin out the negotiations to a profitable length. But Athenades, as soon as the matter was mentioned, fell in with it eagerly. The field had been

his undoing. 'There's a curse on it. Time was, I hoped to clean it off by squaring accounts with the whelp Ephialtes. I prayed that something might drive him home at last. You've heard of the year he burned my grain?'

'Yes, yes!' said Timoleon, who had heard the story many times. 'A pity you didn't catch him. There was a reward out for him, too. That would have come to you. The Amphictyons wanted him, for a traitor.'

Athenades grunted. 'That's nothing to me. I don't care for the reward, and I don't know what the Amphictyons held against him. You have no time for such matters when the money-lenders get their claws into you. But you won't forget the fellow who first put you in their clutches. Take my word for that!'

He followed Timoleon into the inn on the appointed day, with the awkward gait of the farmer. His rough, stained tunic was caught up at one shoulder with a clumsy brooch, and his knotted arms were bare. He wore sandals, and a knife swung at his right side. He looked what he was, an ill man to cross. But to the Athenian he behaved with a sort of cunning deference. They went at it cautiously at first, each taking the other's measure. But an hour later the bargain was struck and the pledges given. They called for wine. Timoleon brought it himself and tactfully withdrew.

They were both elated. Ephialtes nodded across the table, but the farmer held out his cup at arm's length. Ephialtes laughed and reached out to touch his own against it. The fold of his tunic slipped back, and the birth-mark stood out on an arm much paler than Athenades' own. 'Come!' he said. 'Let's hope I have better luck with the field than you!'

Then he put his cup down slowly, untasted. 'What's

the matter ?' Athenades made no answer, staring at that bare arm. The crash of the over-turned table brought the inn-keeper running. But by that time the knife-handle had ceased to twitch. The fallen man sobbed and lay still, while the blood and the spilt wine spread slowly across the flagstones. Athenades repeated a name as if to insist upon it. 'Ephialtes ! Ephialtes, the son of Eurydemos ! I'd know that mark anywhere !'

He threw his head back, and there over Malis hung the Gates, Thermopylæ. Deep in their shadow crouched the stone lion that kept watch there, now that Leonidas could guard the way no more. But Athenades looked through and beyond that. His voice was hoarse, and his face shone. 'The gods sent him back ! It's Ephialtes ! It's the man who burned my standing grain !'

THE ISIS.

*Lissom trees in a gentle breeze
And craft too low to feel it.
A whispered word from a youth is heard
And the answer soft to seal it.*

*Many a time in a far-off clime
We long for the things that are done with
But in our heart there's a special part
For that river we had such fun with.*

S. M. THOMPSON.

BY THE WAY.

By the first of February thoughts are beginning, whatever the weather, to turn to longer days and the hints of returning Spring. We have passed through some curious times, a long spell of unusually warm weather so that it was possible to find buds bursting in the December woods, then a short, sudden snap of intense cold, followed by heavy falls of snow so that all children could rejoice in a white world—to many their first white Christmas Day—and discover to their rather indignant surprise that snow-balling was chilly work for the fingers—and now none can say whether the Spring of 1939 will be early or late. One thing only mankind knows and that is that it will come: in that respect Faith remains absolute. Let the world be what it will good or evil Spring is on its way: that all implicitly believe, the one completely assured piece of confidence in the Western world—and as such of supreme value. If we can indeed believe that unquestioningly—as we do, one and all—so also we could, if we would, believe other things also that Life is not all winter, for example, that our neighbours, whether across the road or across the Channel are not all compact of severity and so forth and so on. It would be worth while at least to try to extend the area of our belief in beneficence—it would both astonish and delight humanity to note how wide, if we did, that area would in all verity almost automatically become.

★ ★ ★

It would appear that the laws relating to our thoroughfares are as antiquated as the minds of some of our rulers. If a

car is parked two and a half hours in a place where it may only be parked for two, an offence is committed ; but if that place is an authorized parking place in the hours of day only and a car is parked there for four hours or more at night, no offence is committed unless obstruction can be proved—which is both difficult and costly. Again, if a van draws up outside a man's house and begins unloading its wares for transport to a shop 28 yards away in front of which is already a van, no offence is committed, however absolute the barrier presented to the owner of the house and however often the unloading is performed. It has been necessary to refer in these columns on more than one occasion to the excessive vanity, erroneously applied, that describes Man scientifically as *homo sapiens* : here is a further example of the misnomer—and he still continues blithely to prohibit whistling for taxis and to allow the use of the pneumatic drill. He enjoys in fact labelling himself as incorrigible.

* * *

Scotland for ever !—It was high time the artistic glories of the great northern nation were shown in London. How well shown they are in the current Exhibition at Burlington House and how well worth showing—a revelation to some, a confirmation to others and a delight to all.

* * *

Why is it, I wonder, that invitations to gentlemen are so frequently sent out in a form in which they are never sent to ladies ? It must be a common happening to many a gentleman to receive a card inviting him 'and lady.' He is named ; it is made perfectly clear that his personal presence is desired—very complimentary, no doubt to him. But what about his lady ? If, as is still quite usually the case he is respectably, and even in some cases happily, married, he is put into the position—which every wife will certainly

agree is an entirely wrong one for him to occupy—of being able to say to her in a lordly fashion ‘I could take any lady I like, you will observe; but I will be gracious and take you.’ Or still worse when, as is almost equally as frequent, his card of invitation merely says ‘and friend.’ Whilst it may be admitted that there are husbands who are so fortunate as to have retained the friendship of their wives, it is surely wrong—and it is indubitably resented by many—that the wife, if wanted (or permitted perhaps would be a more accurate word) should not be named. After all it is not a matter of much clerical difficulty to ascertain whether your guest is or is not married and living domestically: a private host or hostess has to find out; why not a society or public body? And yet such regularly offend. If the cards were sent to the ladies with an ‘and gentleman’ or ‘and friend’ upon them, the result would be of interest.

★ ★ ★

I find the following advice given by the undergraduate editor of a new poetry magazine for the youth of Oxford: ‘A word on technique. If the subject matter is up to date, technique is not worth bothering about. But don’t scorn rhyme nor the traditional metres—the best of the moderns have used them frequently. And if you use *vers libre* it is as well to give it rhythm and possibly form.’

There is something so disingenuous and so artless in this advice that it is irresistibly comic. ‘Play the violin, boys, but don’t bother to learn how to do it: be up to date, that is all that matters; and, besides, that avoids all the difficulties.’ The cover design shows a formless man propping up a broken lamp-post which leans over him drunkenly: it is not clear whether or no this is intended as a pictorial exemplification of the modern poetry advocated within.

★ ★ ★

Extract from a recent paragraph in an evening paper :
 'The house, built in 1780, contains many heirlooms saved when the building was destroyed by fire 55 years ago.' This is first cousin to the celebrated notice : 'Next Friday being Ash-Wednesday, there will be an open-air meeting in the vestry to decide what colour the church shall be white-washed.'

★ ★ ★

A party of students recently marched through Gordon Square, Bloomsbury so we are told, carrying a banner with the words, 'We want America.' Why? What would they do with it? Give it to Germany?

★ ★ ★

'In books,' writes John Cowper Powys in the introduction to his new volume, *The Pleasures of Literature* (Cassell, 12s. 6d. n.), 'dwell all the demons and all the angels of the human mind. It is for this reason that a book-shop—especially a secondhand book-shop—is an arsenal of explosives, an armoury of revolutions, an opium-den of reactions' and of course also has the keys of heaven, as Mr. Powys adds not in words but throughout the 660 pages of his book. He takes the reader on a wide and mighty river, a pilgrimage to many a land and age, Greece, Russia, Italy, France, Spain, Germany, America and of course, most of all, England, beginning with the Bible and ending with Proust—'addressed' as he says, 'obviously to people who love reading,' dealing with those things, namely, books which, as his conclusion states, 'passing into the souls of those that feed upon them' are likely enough to outlive all other products of time. As a book about books this with its range and its scholarship and its meditative comment must rank high.

★ ★ ★

It used to be, perhaps it still is, considered an artistic wrong

to tell a story in pictorial form : and yet year after year the 'picture of the year' in the Royal Academy was almost invariably of this kind, proving at any rate that those who 'know nothing about Art but know what they like' are greatly in the majority. They are also in line with many a famous illustrator as can readily be seen by a study of Henry Reitlinger's very attractive book, *From Hogarth to Keene* (Methuen, 15s. n.). This is a finely produced volume with 87 excellent 'reproductions of black and white drawings by English story-telling artists and illustrators' and will be enjoyed by the amateur and the professional critic. It proves yet again what an artistic race the English in reality are.



It was said a while ago by observers of the trend of modern literature that just as the three-decker volume had completely vanished, so would the biography of similar, or greater, length. But observers are not always right : the very long novel often containing quite as many words as those of old time published in three volumes has several times of late returned and gained the height of favour—*Anthony Adverse* and *Gone with the Wind* are two examples ; and biography, when the subject is of outstanding interest and the author unusually readable, provides exceptions of a like nature : Winston Churchill has done it in his *Marlborough* and now Arthur Bryant provides us with the third of the four instalments of *Samuel Pepys*. This third, entitled *The Saviour of the Navy* (Cambridge University Press, 12s. 6d. n.), shows Pepys at his zenith under James II and takes him until his final fall under William : it has none of the immense sparkle, none of the impropriety and humorous impudence of Pepys's early manhood, but it is far more important, and in Mr. Bryant's hands never for a moment becomes heavy. It is

throughout of exceeding interest, the crescendo of a career not only great in itself but enduring in its influence.

★ ★ ★

From the Cambridge University Press comes also a biography wholly different, but similarly attractive: Helen Morris in her *Portrait of a Chef* (10s. 6d. n.) has treated authoritatively and yet lightly the engaging career of Alexis Soyer, 1809–58. Celebrated in connexion with three such diverse affairs as the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Reform Club, and the Crimean War, he is to-day best remembered by his invention of the Soyer stove, still ‘among the most essential articles of camp equipment’: in his own day he was a notable figure, so that Florence Nightingale described his death as ‘a great disaster,’ and, eccentric as he was, it could be said of him that the only thing he never curried was favour.

★ ★ ★

The fine art of murder proceeds merrily, and as all the most likely plots get used up—for after all there are only a certain number of permutations and combinations possible, according to the rules of this twentieth-century literary game—so has it become necessary for writers, who desire to excel in it, to add on other virtues than those of mere ingenuity. The detective story can be also a fine novel; and among those who are helping towards that consummation the work of Josephine Bell is beginning now to stand out conspicuously. Her latest, *Port of London Murders* (Longmans, 7s. 6d. n.), is not merely a good story of murder, it is also an attractively written account of life—certain aspects of it at any rate—in and around the Port of London: the characterization is skilled, the descriptions are admirable and the whole is a very satisfactory specimen of a modern tale of death-dealing doom.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 184.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 28th February.

'Sleep, —— heavens, before the prow ;

Sleep, —— winds, as he sleeps now.'

1. 'The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft,
And —— swallows twitter in the skies.'

2. 'O, the —— shall run red
With redundancy of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
And flames wrap hill and wood,'

3. 'Where the glossy kingfisher
Flutters when —— -heats are near'

4. 'Near to the silver ——
Sirena dwelleth ;'

5. 'Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet ——aby,'

6. 'Kiss me as if you made believe
You were not sure, this ——,
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up ;'

Answer to Acrostic 182, December number : 'Or lesser breeds without the law—— (Kipling : 'Recessional'). 1. LamB (Thomas Edward Brown : 'Dora'). 2. ÈtheR (Rossetti : 'The Blessèd Damozel'). 3. SeverE (George Meredith : 'Phoebus with Admetus'). 4. SpherE. (George Meredith : 'Phoebus with Admetus'). 5. EnD (Browning : 'The Last Ride Together'). 6. RoseS (Tennyson : 'Maud').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Mrs. C. K. Scriven, Crimple Green, Burniston, Scarborough, and the Rev. G. Young, Old Oxyard, Oare, Marlborough, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MARCH 1939.

POPE: AN AUGUSTAN PORTRAIT.

BY PETER QUENNELL.

It is one of the chief beauties of the early Augustan Age that, since comparatively few figures demand our attention and since the tenor of the period was generally placid, those few figures should stand out in the greatest relief. Each of them fits compactly into the niche he built for himself. No opponent could dispute the powers of Walpole; no critic ever doubted the brilliance of Bolingbroke; Lord Chesterfield was the grand exemplar of worldly wisdom; Pope's position as the foremost poet of the age he lived in seemed as secure in 1730 as it seems to-day. His development had been regular; his gifts were harmonious. But, just as the apparent calm of the period depended upon the maintenance of an unpopular dynasty, and just as Walpole, its representative and guardian, was the cleverest and strongest but also the worst hated minister of his time, so Pope's career conceals an element of contradiction. His life-story might be plotted in two separate graphs. First, there is the curve of his literary development—a smooth upward line unbroken by any of the brutal disappointments, maddening false starts or major reverses that fall to the ordinary writer's share. Fortune had been invariably, extraordinarily benevolent. Born in conditions that had neither the disadvantages of downright poverty nor the distractions of overwhelming affluence, he was immune from financial embarrassment as long as he lived. He showed youthful promise, which was immediately recognised; and, though not always generous towards his

friends, he recorded his indebtedness in flowing couplets :

Granville *the polite,*
And knowing Walsh, *would tell me I could write ;*
Well-natur'd Garth *infram'd with early praise,*
And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endur'd my lays :
The courtly Talbot, Somers, *Sheffield read,*
Ev'n mitred Rochester *would nod the head,*
And St. John's self (great Dryden's friends before)
With open arms receiv'd one Poet more.

Thus encouraged, he had moved on swiftly from triumph to triumph. The *Pastorals* were slight ; but they were correct and charming. *An Essay on Criticism* had followed them two years later and, to show that he was as versatile as he was gravely accomplished, was itself followed in the year 1712 by the exquisite apparition of *The Rape of the Lock*. His translation of the *Iliad* had secured his fame. True, the *Odyssey* and the edition of Shakespeare had been less successful ; but they had entailed at the very most a temporary set-back, while the *Odyssey* had earned him a handsome reward. Then, in 1728, with his declaration of war on the Dunces, he had revealed himself the supreme exponent of literary satire.

So easy and so continuous had been his progress . . . But beneath the first graph we must trace a second ; beneath that masterful smoothly ascending curve runs a line jagged and erratic as the chart of an earthquake, scored in the blackest of ink with the wildest of needles, the graph of his emotional and nervous life. From his father, he had inherited the frame of a hunchback and, with it, that odd mixture of vitality, susceptibility and extreme pugnacity which sometimes inhabits a hopelessly crippled organism. In a face sharpened by intelligence, malice and suffering were set large and uncommonly beautiful eyes ; the nose

was long and high-bridged and delicate ; but ' his mouth (according to Sir Joshua Reynolds who remembered as a boy once having seen him) had those peculiar marks which are always found in the mouths of crooked persons,' and the muscles crossing his cheeks projected like cords. Violent headaches accompanied chronic insomnia ; and Roubilliac the statuary, who made a bust of him from life, observed that ' his countenance was that of a person who had been much afflicted with headache ; and that he should have known the fact from the contracted appearance of the skin above the eyebrows . . . ' Add to this an air of unquenchable liveliness. He might speak of his existence as a ' long disease ' ; but there could be no question of the tenacity with which he clung to it or of his delighted preoccupation with the affairs of the world. He loved the world ; it often hurt him ; he struck back furiously. He loved his fame ; at the smallest threat to it, he was up in arms and, in this mood, sometimes attacked when he thought he defended. Intensely suspicious and absurdly sensitive, he saw all opponents as of the same size if they aroused his enmity.

Then no manœuvre was too black or too devious. The history of Pope's campaign to discredit the Dunces (which included the administration of an emetic to a piratical bookseller, the composition of scurrilous and indecent lampoons, the employment of anonymous letters and disguised emissaries) is a melodrama that often lapses into farce or a comedy with decidedly tragic undertones. No affront was too slight for Pope to remember it ; no adversary so vulgar as to be beneath him ; and among the small fry of bankrupt publishers and struggling critics, he raged with the ferocity of a sectarian prosecutor and the high moral indignation of a religious reformer. As a controversialist, Pope is at his best when he is broadly scurrilous

—for example, when he dashes off his spirited and Rabelaisian account of ‘*a Horrid and Barbarous Revenge by Poison on the Body of Mr. Edmund Curll*’ (the episode of the emetic administered in a glass of sack)—but at his feeblest when he strikes an attitude of superior virtue. Pope himself never paused to query his motives. As the editor of his early prose works has pointed out,¹ it is an extremely interesting and illuminating fact that his third onslaught on Edmund Curll, the most abusive and improper of all his lampoons, should have been composed at about the same time as his splendid dedication to the *Iliad*, one of the nobler prose achievements of the eighteenth century. In Pope’s character such a dichotomy had always existed. At his most petulant, he continued to see himself as the peace-loving private citizen dragged from his dignified retirement by mercenary scribblers :

*Whom have I hurt? has poet yet, or peer,
Lost the arch’d eye-brow, or Parnassian sneer?*

—at his most untrustworthy, as the truest and staunchest of friends. His own mind never alighted on the contradiction. He remained incorrigibly aggressive and fiercely proud.

Pope had a deep respect for magnanimity. Conscious in himself of generous and noble impulses, unconscious perhaps that they did not often appear in his private dealings, he made it his business to present an estimable character to the world at large. Few poets have designed more flattering self-portraits; and, not content with the limitations of poetic portraiture, Pope carried the same method into his correspondence, carefully calculating the effect it produced on his friends and posterity. He must seem lofty,

¹ Norman Ault, *The Prose Works of Alexander Pope, 1711–29*.

good-humoured, calm, disinterested. Incidentally, he let slip no opportunity of editing and re-touching the letters he had already written and posted, and for this purpose sometimes reclaimed them from the original addressees. He detested the slipshod and the second-rate ; he abominated the petty and the meretricious. Was it not natural, then, that he should polish up his private character as diligently as he polished and revised his couplets and that, loving the virtues he omitted to practise with platonic enthusiasm, he should pay them the tribute of persistently believing they had always been his ? At least, the aspiration was there, the passion for goodness—a passion that, like many others in Pope's life, was thwarted by the accident of physical infirmity. Personal happiness had eluded him as well as virtue. Uncommonly susceptible to the charm of women, with a sensuous predilection for their friendship and company and an absorbing interest in every detail of the lives they led, he was doomed to a series of abortive love-affairs. Martha Blount remained a devoted companion to the very end ; but Theresa Blount deserted and betrayed him ; while one of the strongest attachments he ever conceived had the bitterest aftermath. Overshadowing a multitude of minor reverses loomed the dreadful story of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

On Pope's side, it had been a profound and serious passion. On Lady Mary's—well, Pope was a famous writer ; she herself was a fashionable and accomplished woman ; and his protestations (she may have considered) did both of them credit. Lady Mary had a high opinion of her charms and abilities. From her father, the extravagant Duke of Kingston, she derived her pride, her gusto and her eccentricity. It had been (as she remembered) the happiest moment of her life when, at the age of seven, she had been

sent for by her father to the Kit-Cat Club, lifted on to a table and solemnly toasted, elected a reigning beauty of the day, then passed 'from the lap of one poet, or patriot, or statesman, to the arms of another' and 'heard her wit and beauty loudly extolled on every side'—mere 'pleasure' was much too mild a word to describe her sensations ! And so she had grown up, in the dashing paternal style. Her marriage, against her father's wishes, to the good-looking and talented Edward Wortley Montagu, had been romantic and at first extremely happy ; and it was some two or three years afterwards that she had encountered Pope. This was probably during the course of (1715). A year later, she departed with her husband on his celebrated embassy to the Sublime Porte ; and Pope's devotion pursued her as she travelled eastwards :

'The poetical manner' (he wrote) 'in which you paint some of the scenes about you, makes me despise my native country, and sets me on fire to fall into the dance about your fountain in Belgrade-Village. I fancy myself in my romantic thoughts and distant admiration of you, not unlike the man in the Alchymist, that has a passion for the Queen of the Fairies ; I lie dreaming of you in moon-shiny nights, exactly in the posture of Endymion gaping for Cynthia in a picture ; and with just such a surprise and rapture should I awake, if, after your long revolutions were accomplished, you should at last come rolling back again, smiling with all that gentleness and serenity peculiar to the moon and you ; and gilding the same mountains from which you first set out on your solemn melancholy journey.'

During 1718, Lady Mary did indeed return to England ; Pope helped his friends to find a house at Twickenham ; and for at least two years the visionary pursuit continued. That it remained visionary was Pope's tragedy and the friendship's undoing. Lady Mary, a woman exceptional

in all things, was exceptional in her bold and forthright epicureanism, to which she brought a certain strain of inherited rakishness. 'Considering what short-lived weak animals men are,' she had written to the Abbé Conti on her travels, 'is there any study so beneficial as the study of present pleasure?' Her 'present pleasures' were one day to become notorious, and in 1720 they did not include the love of Pope, who possessed none of the qualifications of a successful amorist. He was to be flattered, corresponded with but kept at arm's length. The delight he felt in thinking of her return (he had declared in October 1717) 'transports me beyond the bounds of common sense and decency'; but her return had procured him little of the joy he hoped for and a sense of deep frustration clouded his spirit. Forlorn, he watched the growth of his house and gardens, the enlargement of avenues and the planting of coppices, the erection of urns and obelisks and rustic temples, 'twisted and twirled and rhymed and harmonised' into a miniature landscape. Gay wrote to congratulate him on completing his labours; but Pope retorted with a lyric as poignant in its emotion as it is fine and high-finished in expression:

*Ah friend, 'tis true—this truth you lovers know—
In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow;
In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes
Of hanging mountains, and of sloping greens . . .
What are the gay parterre, the chequered shade,
The morning bower, the evening colonnade,
But soft recesses of uneasy minds,
To sigh unheard in to the passing winds?
So the struck deer in some sequestered part
Lies down to die, the arrow at his heart;
There stretched unseen in coverts hid from day,
Bleeds drop by drop; and pants his life away.*

*Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
 His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
 Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
 Be stopp'd in vials, or transfix'd with pins ;
 Or plung'd in lakes of bitter washes lie,
 Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's eye :
 Gums and Pomatums shall his flight restrain,
 While clogg'd he beats his silken wings in vain ;
 Or Alum styptics with contracting pow'r
 Shrink his thin essence like a rivell'd flow'r :
 Or, as Ixion fix'd, the wretch shall feel
 The giddy motion of the whirling Mill,
 In fumes of burning Chocolate shall glow,
 And tremble at the sea that froths below !*

Or evoked in images, at once so ludicrous and so brilliantly imaginative, the phantom shapes that surround the Goddess Spleen.

To the same cause—a sensitiveness rendered doubly acute by bodily embarrassment and a frequent experience of physical suffering—may be attributed Pope's love of very small, very delicately organised or very fragile objects. Again and again, he reverts to the spider's web, now with admiration, as in the celebrated couplet from *An Essay on Man* :

*The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine !
 Feels at each thread, and lives along the line . . .*

now to supply material for a derisive comparison.

There are occasions, indeed, when the existence of this sentiment appears to have made him defeat his satirical purpose ; and his somewhat uncharitable attack upon scientific diletantism in the Fourth Book of *The Dunciad* is so feeling as to develop almost into a pæan of praise :

*The common soul, of Heav'n's more frugal make,
Serves but to keep fools pert, and knaves awake :
A drowsy watchman, that just gives a knock,
And breaks our rest, to tell us what's o'clock.
Yet by some object ev'ry brain is stirr'd ;
The dull may waken to a humming-bird ;
The most recluse, discreetly open'd, find
Congenial matter in the cockle-kind ;
The mind, in metaphysics at a loss,
May wander in a wilderness of moss ;
The head that turns at superlunar things,
Pois'd with a tail, may steer on Wilkins' wings.¹*

For a further example of his delight in images of littleness, we may turn to the Fifth of the *Moral Essays*, *Epistle to Mr. Addison*, Occasioned by his *Dialogues on Medals* :

*Ambition sigh'd : She found it vain to trust
The faithless column, and the crumbling bust . . .
Convinc'd, she now contracts her vast design,
And all her triumphs shrink into a coin.
A narrow ORB each crowded conquest keeps,
Beneath her palm here sad Judea weeps.
Now scantier limits the proud arch confine,
And scarce are seen the prostrate Nile or Rhine ;
A small Euphrates through the piece is roll'd,
And little eagles wave their wings in gold.*

One observes, too, how often Pope's liking for distinction, clarity, precise sharp contrasts led him to deal in images of light and shade, and describe the brilliant flash of metal from a dusky background.

Thus, in the *Ode for Music*, we find an invocation :

¹ Wilkins' wings : One of the first projectors of the Royal Society ; who, among many enlarged and useful notions, entertained the extravagant hope of a possibility to fly to the moon . . .—Pope.

*By the heroes' armed shades,
Glitt'ring through the gloomy glades ;
By the youths that dyed for love,
Wand'ring in the myrtle grove . . .*

cchoed in one of *Two Chorus's To the Tragedy of Brutus*, and re-cchoed in a couplet from *Windsor Forest* :

*Let Volga's banks with iron squadrons shine,
And groves of lances glitter on the Rhine,*

while, in the romantic *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*, a spectral shaft of light catches the blade of the victim's weapon :

*What beck'ning ghost, along the moonlight shade
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade ?
'Tis she !—but why that bleeding bosom gor'd,
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword !*

It was immensely to the advantage of Pope's genius, and it is to the credit of his training and the age he lived in, that this sensitiveness should have been controlled in all that he did by a stern and uncompromising love of order. As an attempt at philosophical exposition, the *Essay on Man* will hardly bear criticism ; but scattered up and down that extraordinary poem are splendid passages which contain the essentials of Pope's poetic doctrine—his view of poetry as a means of expression that does not attempt to transcend ordinary intellectual experience but remains anchored to the ground of common knowledge. Here it may, of course, be objected that the pleasure we derive from Pope's finest flights—for example, from some of the passages quoted above—is not explicable merely in terms of what he *says* but, like all extremely rarefied æsthetic emotion, seems to correspond to states of feeling that it would be impossible

to reproduce by prosaic methods. So magnificent and fully equipped a poet can scarcely have failed to recognise those over-tones of expression that make great poetry the force it is ; but his Augustan training inclined him the other way, and such felicities occur—not indeed as after-thoughts, not as ornament to be admired for its own beauty—but as the necessary extension, the spontaneous production, of the theme he dealt with. His centre was still fixed in the centre of his subject-matter—that subject was always the experience and the mind of man : his poetic radius swung out through increasing circles.

Sense was the solid groundwork of poetic achievement. In the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, he deprecated the merit of his early and (he had come to consider) too mellifluous and easily accomplished *Pastorals*, and, in the *Essay on Man*, re-affirmed the limitations of sensibility that a rational man and a good poet should set himself :

*The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind ;
No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear . . .
Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n,
T'inspect a mite, not comprehend the Heaven ?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonise at ev'ry pore ?
Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain . . .*

The drawbacks of Pope's attitude, and the inconsistencies in which it frequently involved him, receive sufficient illustration in the *Essay on Man*. The history of the poem is very curious ; for Pope undertook it at the instigation of his admirer Bolingbroke, and Bolingbroke seems to have provided a kind of prose skeleton, consisting of a number

of propositions, which Pope thereupon dressed in poetic imagery. Bolingbroke's bent was predominantly agnostic ; Pope's Catholicism had a strongly Deist tinge ; and their joint product is neither one thing nor the other. For, though he afterwards altered the line, Pope could not escape from his vision of terrestrial existence as—

A mighty maze of paths without a plan—

and, after a variety of astonishing and inconclusive asseverations, designed to suggest that such a plan there must be, if only because the apparent lack of it is so painfully noticeable, he descends to begging the question in verses of sonorous dignity. Pope is at his best when he remains true to his real central theme, the 'proper study' of any right-minded Augustan thinker. Otherwise, it has been justly remarked that, whereas 'the art of Milton works from within, fusing all the materials into one solid mass,' Pope's is the art 'which begins by elaborating the parts and afterwards endeavours to fit them together by plastering over the interstices.'¹ The operation is performed with very great skill ; but Pope's virtuosity is often a little mechanical and the structure of the work remains fragmentary. It is not that Pope's approach to the problem was devoid of seriousness ; but the problem itself was totally unsuited to the mind of the age.

An Essay on Man, then, is to be regarded as a repository of scattered maxims and splendid individual passages ; while the greatest concentration of Pope's genius we must look for elsewhere—particularly in the fascinating *Moral Essays*. The effect these poems produce is strong and immediate ; but to enjoy them as they deserve to be enjoyed, and to

¹ Professor J. B. Mayor, quoted by Mark Pattison.

re-read them with constantly increasing pleasure, we must first take into account their critical background. Many of the phrases employed by Augustan criticism have since lost their edge by being used in the dullest and most pedagogic context. For example, Pope's worship of *correctitude* . . . To be correct (as Pope, at the instigation of 'knowing *Walsh*,' had attempted from the time when he first began to set pen to paper) meant something more than to be tamely and safely orthodox; it implied conformity, but not a soulless respectability. Augustan literature had both æsthetic and social virtues; for its belief in taste presupposed the existence of a society worthy to sit in judgment upon its productions, and almost for the last time the critical tribunal to which a poet submitted his work was composed, not of an *avant-garde* of the poet's contemporaries, but of a circle comprising all educated men. That the Augustan Age over-estimated the value of its own good taste, and mistook the taste of a period for Taste itself, is a point so obvious that it requires no stressing. Yet this transcendent belief in its own standards had in some ways an extremely beneficial influence on the development of literature and produced results peculiarly striking in the employment of language. In most periods, language is either a little in advance or has fallen a little behind the requirements of the subject matter with which it deals. In the present age, for example, language tries in vain to catch up with the bewildering variety and complexity of modern experience; and we employ a nineteenth-century vocabulary in our attempts to convey twentieth-century phenomena. During the Augustan period, the growth of language and the development of the contemporary consciousness would appear almost exactly to have coincided, and a perfect balance was established between manner and subject-matter.

The poet and his material were no longer at variance : Man and surrounding Nature had come to terms.

For a time, the understanding remained harmonious ; and it is worth noting that the word ' Nature ' occurs almost as often in the literature of the early eighteenth century as in works produced the first half of the nineteenth. Fidelity to Nature was all-important. Truth and simplicity were of paramount value. But poets are seldom metaphysicians ; and the significance of words that they employ must be judged rather in terms of the works they produce than as the component figures of a philosophical equation. The Augustan attitude towards Nature was often vague ; but, whereas the Romantic poet found in Nature the justification and pattern of his own confusion, the Augustan writer assumed an entirely opposite view-point. A Deist, even though, like Pope, he still clung to some of the outward formulæ of Christian belief, he had transferred to the Nature he professed to admire his faith in the godhead he had begun to discard ; and in Nature he recognised the foundations of beauty and order, which it was his function to render intelligible by literary means. One discovered a harmony that already existed. . . . After the restless chaotic movement of the seventeenth century, when the conditions of poetry were so confused that verses addressed to God by the change of a few unimportant epithets might be metamorphosed into a poem addressed to one's mistress, and the wildest and most elusive strokes of imagery were employed to convey the most complicated shades of feeling, a hush seemed to have fallen on the contemporary consciousness. Suddenly, the world appeared in a calmer light—not pleasant, certainly, for with classic contentment go classic woes—but comprehensible, firmly terrestrial, solidly established, in which the rational and cultured poet could

walk at leisure. Taste and knowledge were his soundest shield against worldly vicissitudes. They were as important to an Augustan as grace to a Puritan.

Throughout any attempted study of the Augustan Age emphasis must fall regularly and, at times, monotonously on the expressions *calm, dignified, correct, symmetrical*. We see the period in terms of its landscape and architecture: the solid Palladian façades of its great houses, the trim reasonable classicism of its smaller buildings, with their large windows and general air of spacious decency, its carefully gardened parks and agreeable market towns. Amid such prospects, we imagine Pope himself, a diminutive equestrian figure, ambling down to visit his friend, Lord Bathurst, jogging over to Lady Suffolk's at Marble Hall or making a leisurely and lonely journey to the cloisters of Oxford. But these generalisations are only partially based on fact. In distinguishing between Augustan and Romantic, we are distinguishing not so much between two sharply contrasted periods of literary taste (neatly opposed to one another in every detail) as between the differing distribution of similar qualities. Thus, if the early Augustan Age is to be represented as a fertile and well-tamed landscape, with here a porticoed mansion on the brow of a hill—its owner meditating 'improvements' as he strolls through his park—and here a neatly built, commodious parsonage, of which the incumbent plays backgammon and drinks port and uses a heavy folio of sermons to press his bands, we must also allow for a distant commotion like the approach of a thunderstorm that begins to ruffle the tree-tops and cloud the waters.

Already the horizon is becoming dark. An emotion to which it would have been difficult to put a name, at first rather felt than distinctly apprehended—

*Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods*

—as in the ghostly interval that precedes the explosion of a summer tempest. Pope appreciated these stirrings, though he did not exaggerate them; and, in addition to a great number of passages gathered from *Eloisa to Abelard*, the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* and even from the books of *The Dunciad* itself, evidences of Romantic feeling also appear in his private letters. They, too, reflect a strange unreal beauty. They reveal his delight in the incongruous and the fantastic; and he writes, not of the inconvenience caused him by inundations at Twickenham but of the ‘prodigiously fine’ prospect they afford:

‘It is just like an arm of the sea; and the flood over my grass-plot . . . looks like an open bay to the terrace. The opposite meadow, where you so often walked is covered with sails.’

—describes the old King in the moonlight, ‘giving audience all alone to the birds under the garden wall,’ admires the variety of autumn woodlands and, when he visits the hall of an ancient and dilapidated manor house, dwells on the splendours of ‘one vast arched window, beautifully darkened with scutcheons of ancient glass . . . One shining pane bears date 1286.’

Particularly moving in its rhythm and resonance is part of the letter that recounts his journey to Oxford:

‘. . . I rid over hanging hills, whose tops were edged with groves, and whose feet watered with winding rivers, listening to the falls cataracts below, and the murmuring of the winds above: the gloomy verdure of Stonor succeeded to these; and then the shades of the evening overtook me. The moon rose in the clearest sky I ever saw, by whose solemn light I paced on slowly, without company,

or any interruption to the range of my thoughts. About a mile before I reached Oxford, all the bells tolled in different notes ; the clocks of every college answered one another, and sounded forth (some in a deeper, some a softer tone) that it was eleven at night.'

The effect produced by this exquisitely simple yet carefully studied passage, of which the charm seems to depend partly on the judicious choice of adjectives, partly on the sense of gathering emotion, conveyed by the inner construction of the paragraph with its arrangement of gradually lengthening periods, may be compared to the effect of certain of Wordsworth's poems or to that brief note in which Stendhal sets the tone of an entire landscape by mentioning the '*gouttes sonores*' which came splashing from above while he ascended an Alpine trail. It is romantic in that it does not (as did many of Pope's imitators) parcel out the scene into fragments of neat description or attempt to transmogrify it into a conventionally classic landscape where

. . . *Lesser nymphs on sides of hills*
From plaything urns pour down their rills.

—but evokes the essential atmosphere of the hour and place—the unreal flatness of the moonshine on a deserted road, the sonority and melancholy of the distant bells—as they were reverberated by a specially sensitive imagination. Equally romantic, though the romanticism is less personal, is the couplet in which Pope describes the desolation of frost-bound Middle-Eastern steppes :

Lo ! where Mæotis sleeps, and hardly flows
The freezing Tanais thro' a waste of snows . . .

or his sumptuous excursion into Italian themes :

. . . *To happy convents, bosom'd deep in vines,*
Where slumber abbots, purple as their wines :

*To isles of fragrance, lilly-silver'd vales,
 Diffusing languor in the panting gales :
 To lands of singing, or of dancing slaves,
 Love whisp'ring woods, and lute-resounding waves.
 But chief her shrine where naked Venus keeps,
 And Cupids ride the lion of the deeps ;
 Where, eas'd of fleets, the Adriatic main
 Wafts the smooth eunuch and enamour'd swain.
 Led by my hand, he saunter'd Europe round,
 And gather'd ev'ry vice on Christian ground . . .*

Individual in his gifts, advanced in his theories, Pope was nevertheless a representative writer ; and his curious yet happy combination of classic and romantic elements was, to some extent, a reflection of the taste of his age. Take, for instance, the revolutionary development of gardening. Whereas, only a generation earlier, the influence of Le Nôtre had still prevailed, absolute symmetry had been enforced in gardening lay-outs, straight avenues converged on unshaded fountains, and parterres were stiffly brocaded with curlicues of box or floral arabesques on a groundwork composed of splinters of coloured marble, the great 'improvers' had begun to come into their own. Parterre and formal avenue were swept away ; the turf of the park was encouraged to roll up to the steps of the portico ; symmetry and regularity were denounced as barbarous ; and Pope, himself an enthusiastic gardener and a member of the small eclectic circle who had gathered around Lord Burlington at Chiswick, ridicules the pompous pleasaunces of the Duke of Chandos, in which—

*No pleasing intricacies intervene,
 No artful wildness to perplex the scene ;
 Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
 And half the platform just reflects the other . . .*

*Here Amphirite sails thro' myrtle bowers ;
There gladiators fight, or die in flow'rs ;
Unwater'd see the drooping sea-horse mourn,
And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty urn.*

His precepts in the matter of garden-design are so well-known that only the introduction need be quoted :

*Consult the genius of the place in all ;
That tells the waters, or to rise or fall . . .
Calls in the country, catches op'ning glades,
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades !*

Bridgeman (patronised by Bubb Doddington) and William Kent (sponsored by Lord Burlington and the Queen herself) gave practical form to Pope's suggestions. It was Kent's aim, not to torment Nature on the Procrustean bed of Le Nôtre's formality, but to 'brush her robe,' set off her beauties to the greatest advantage or to amplify and underline them with the assistance of Art. 'The great principles on which he worked (according to Horace Walpole) were perspective, and light and shade. Groupes of trees broke too uniform or too extensive a lawn ; evergreens and woods were opposed to the glare of the champain . . . He followed nature even in her faults.' But, while Kent was a Romantic out of doors, he was a true and faithful classicist within ; and a Palladian house remained the centre of a Romantic landscape. So Pope might make excursions into Romantic imagery but returned home always to the 'proper study' he had originally chosen.

Hence the compactness, yet the variety, of his poetic achievement ; hence the flexibility with which he adapts his method to different moods. Pope, in common with other great poets, has an extraordinary aptitude for reproducing the diversity and subtlety of the emotions he wishes to express by his alterations of pace and his changes of tone.

In *Characters of Women*, for example, one of his most astonishing achievements, he alternates between passages of pure lyricism and bursts of analytical invective. No novelist could have made shorter work of his feminine victims, Cloe, Flavia, Silia and the rest ; but because the consideration of women and their lives evoked in Pope a kind of sensuous melancholy, mingled with feelings of regret and desire, he reserves for them passages of moving loveliness, as when he depicts the decadence of the ageing she-rakes :

*Pleasures the sex, as children birds, pursue,
Still out of reach, yet never out of view ;
Sure, if they catch, to spoil the toy at most,
To covet flying, and regret when lost . . .
Asham'd to own they gave delight before,
Reduc'd to feign it, when they give no more :
As hags hold sabbaths less for joy than spight,
So these their merry, miserable night :
Still round and round the ghosts of beauty glide,
And haunt the places where their honour dy'd.*

Of Pope's workmanship it would be difficult to speak too highly. Notice, for instance, his uncommonly skilful yet unobtrusive employment of alliteration, and his preference for sibilants in a crucial line :

*Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
'Most women have no characters at all.'
Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear . . .*

or—

*Is there, who, lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls ?*

or—

*Not Berenice's Locks first rose so bright,
The heav'ns bespangling with dishevel'd light.*

But his gift of concentrated expression is no less remarkable. He is one of those poets who triumphs through the restraints he imposes on his own facility ; and, within the tight framework of the rhyming couplet—a medium that calls for unremitting strictness, since each couplet must form an individual harmony yet slip into its proper place in the general scheme—he achieves effects of unexampled breadth and freedom. Here is the dignity—here is the magnanimity—he had always aspired to. Here, crystallised in art, are the qualities of which, in terms of life and conduct, he had never presented more than an awkward travesty. Compare Pope's motives in attacking the Duchess of Marlborough, Addison or Hervey with the grace, speed and energy of the attack itself, and the paradox of his existence becomes doubly clear. The noble and the ignoble—the mean and dignified—are at length reconciled by the mysterious processes of æsthetic creation.

JUNGLE LEAVES.

BY VERRIER ELWIN.

[*The author of this diary, living among the Gonds in Central India, the only European for many a score of miles, attracted much attention by the publication of his Diary, Leaves from the Jungle, two years ago, since when in Phulmat of the Hills and A Cloud that's Dragonish he has put his knowledge into the form of fiction also : here he returns for a month to his Diary.*]

1st. Great commotion in Leper Refuge. Adri is accused of witchcraft and trying to make the other patients worse. Two women say they peeped into her hut and saw her actually changing herself into a tigress. 'The skin was ready and she was growling. She had no tail so we knew it was magic.' Adri certainly has very sinister appearance, so, after careful enquiry, we send her and her husband with letter of recommendation to one of the Protestant missions.

2nd. Pet crane eats half a pound of ammonium nitrate, and is so stimulated that it at once achieves its first long flight. Panda Baba comes to see me with a gift of illicitly trapped venison. Respond to this by presenting him with a bottle of beer which he drinks suspiciously and with an air of disappointment, then turns to me and says, 'Now give me two annas for a bottle of real liquor, something that makes one warm.'

3rd. Having been appointed an Honorary Magistrate, don the dignity of Mr. Nupkins and listen to a number of Gonds perjuring themselves before me. Assisted by polygamous Gond clerk. On asking him if he has brought his wife with him, 'Not all of them, Your Honour,' he says.

Many curious oaths are taken—By the earth, by the sacred saj tree, by my maternal aunt—but the most curious is when an accused suddenly swears ‘By the Magistrate’s pen.’ A rather unfortunate oath as the pen in question has just completed writing a hundred thousand words of fiction.

4th. Set out on an ethnographical expedition to Rupni-dadar. This involves a preliminary car journey of sixty miles over roads where we frequently have to get out and take soundings to see if we are on them or not. This would normally take ten hours, but after twenty miles reach a small river, and trying to cross it unfortunately press accelerator instead of brake. There is a loud crash, car stops dead, and water pours over the floor-boards. Summon villagers fortunately at hand and they push car up the bank where we discover we have broken the main electric cable. Long pause for quiet meditation over this, as we are a hundred miles from nearest garage. Then my companion Shamrao suddenly leaps to his feet, gets his electric torch, removes the wire from the bottom and after miracles of adjustment gets the car going again. It is now night, and very dark and cold. No supper and feel toothache beginning. Drive on for thirty miles which takes five hours, then meet a leopard. In the excitement of this stall the engine and the cable breaks again. Shamrao and the cook work hard for an hour, and at last car moves again and goes on till we reach destination long after midnight in icy wind, and only available shelter a hut whose walls appear to have been eaten by goats.

5th. Awake in agony of toothache, and go on for another ten miles on foot till we at last reach charming Baiga village and are greeted by large crowd of affable, slightly bottled Baigas, who insist on calling me the new Raja of Central India. Hastily swallowing some aspirins, divert their atten-

tion to the safe and solid topics of schismogenesis, diachronic change and cyclothymia, in all of which they are naturally profoundly interested.

In the evening a fine exhibition of Baiga dancing, and some songs, no doubt intended complimentary, about the English.

*The ever-touring Englishmen have built their bungaloes
All over our sweet forest.*

They drive their trains with smoke.

O look at them, how they talk on wires to one another !

*With their wires they have bound the whole world together for
themselves.*

And a little later,

The train comes puffing into the jungle.

In one car rides the King,

In another rides the Queen,

In a third is the saheb with shining spectacles.

The train comes puff-puff-puff.

The King and Queen are puffing too.

The saheb with shining spectacles

Gives presents to the Baigas.

This saheb, who is now a well-known Commissioner in the Province, has cost me a pretty penny by his example of generosity, which the Baigas never weary of recounting.

6th. Toothache unabated, and face swollen to such a size that I can hardly pronounce the blessed word 'exogamy.' This naturally reduces my prestige among the Baigas and I decide to go home and have the tooth Seen To. Just before leaving go a short distance into the jungle and a large black sow follows me in a meaning manner. I wait for her, and she trots up and, rather reverently I thought, lays a mango leaf at my feet. Rather moved by this sort of Francis among the birds touch about it, and go on my way musing on the unity of all creation.

7th. Reach home, and find the bat which had been living above my bed departed. This considered by all a very bad omen, and no one surprised when I go down with high fever.

8th. Mahatu, our family magician, looks in and immediately diagnoses my trouble. 'At Rupnidadar,' he says, 'there is a very dangerous witch. She sent a leaf full of evil magic to you by means of that sow. We must send the magic back to her.' He takes another leaf, wraps some cotton wool in it, breathes heavily and mutters some incantations and then blows it all away in the direction of Rupnidadar. Within an hour my temperature is normal.

9th. Man comes to the Court complaining that his wife has been enticed away. 'That,' he says, 'I could have borne, but they carried off my two little pigs as well.'

11th. Pet crane has now taken to standing by me when I am typing and trying to help. Is rather good at pressing down the keys with his long beak. Let him do it, as I have always wanted to prove the truth of that gag about the six monkeys and all the works of Shakespeare. Several patients come fifty miles for treatment in the Dispensary with apparently quite incurable diseases, but Shamrao unembarrassed and doses them all heavily with mag. sulph. which does them a lot of good. What they want, however, is injections; a youth with a fractured arm is particularly insistent in demanding them.

12th. Cook startles us to-day by announcing a 'Buttocks Savoury' for supper. He is inordinately proud of the few English dishes he knows. The other day a discussion in village as to what kind of *saheb* I was. The Commissioner had recently visited us. There was no doubt about *him*—he was a *pukka saheb*. An Indian official had also been—

he was a *dal bhat saheb*. But what was I? Our cook solved the riddle. 'He is a *savoury saheb*,' he declared.

13th. In middle of night roused by news that Juna, beautiful young Gond girl, recently married to one of our boys, has been taken violently ill. Find her unconscious with, apparently, acute cerebral malaria. Shamrao stays with her all night, but she is still unconscious in the morning.

14th. Shamrao having gone to sleep, go to see patient and find hut filled with magicians who are sitting round fire in which iron instruments are glowing red-hot. They have already disfigured the girl's face with these and are about to attack the rest of her body, but I throw them all out, and send the magicians packing. These, however, merely retire to a neighbouring house where they crouch over their winnowing fans, and soon arrive at a diagnosis. Some time ago Juna's elder sister went into a house where a gun was kept in a corner. She was carrying a lamp. As she approached the gun the lamp went out, this clearly indicating that there was an evil spirit, Banduk Deo, living in the gun. Banduk Deo jumped on the girl and when she next went to see Juna, accompanied her. Banduk Deo only attacked Juna, she left the 'carrier' alone. Juna dies at sunset without regaining consciousness, and is buried within the hour. The family are poor and the husband away, so it is a sad little funeral, in the dark, hurried and ill-attended. During the night, hyenas dig up the body, and in the morning nothing is left save the girl's beautiful hair strewn above the desecrated grave.

15th. Juna's husband returns. Directly he approaches the house Banduk Deo attacks him also. Taking the precaution of first eating a heavy meal, he goes completely mad and remains so for several days. In the afternoon, a girl coming from the well, a pitcher of water on her head,

passes the spot and is attacked. She falls to the ground in agony.

16th. One of the lepers is seized by the furious spirit and dies before nightfall. In the afternoon a wedding procession passes the spot, and the bride is attacked. There is now a real panic, and people from the neighbouring houses begin to shift their things. It is not easy to calm everyone down, but at last it is done, and Banduk Deo seems to leave the village.

17th. Visiting neighbouring village with a view to opening a primary school there. Violent hail-storm catches us, and we take shelter in house of what turns out to be the local Garpagari, or Hail Averter. Find him sitting placidly in his doorway muttering incantations and blowing hail-stones in the direction of our own village. The hail soon passes, and we go home, where we find our crippled friend Tutta, who is also a Garpagari, in a great state of rage because, he says, someone has been blowing hail at our village. 'But I blew it out again at once,' he says, 'and it did no damage.'

18th. Pet monkey gets loose, and embarks on long-meditated scheme of destruction. After tearing a pillow to pieces and breaking a small chair, it eats my copy of Malinowski's *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, and promptly goes mad. Attacks my person with a complete freedom from all inhibitions and I fall heavily to the ground to the secret delight of the village.

20th. Middle-aged Gond landlord comes to school, and sits with tiny children learning to spell. Tells us that he was swindled by a money-lender who persuaded him to put this thumb-print on a document he couldn't read, and is determined to prevent a repetition of the disaster. Visit a District Council School in neighbourhood, bright and well

attended. The walls are covered with mottoes which are, for some curious reason, in English. Notice the following occur in succession—‘Pray to the God daily.’ ‘Tit for Tat.’ ‘Forgive Your Enemies.’ ‘Clean Your Teeth.’ ‘God Save the King.’

22nd. Getting good reception on wireless, in spite of the steep sky’s commotion. Villagers greatly enjoy the music. Lectures seem less to their taste. This evening came in rather late, and found entire audience lying round the loud speaker fast asleep, while overhead boomed out an admirable lecture, in Hindi, on Rural Uplift.

23rd. Astonishing visit from a real Memsahib. Am introduced to her as an anthropologist. She looks rather shocked at this, then leans towards me and asks in a quiet and confidential tone, ‘And is anthropology very *prevalent* in this District, Mr. Elwin?’ Later, seeing a poor old Gond without a nose, and a barber whose entire body is a mass of sores, lying in our Guest House, says, ‘What a curious life you must lead! I don’t think that anyone suffering from syphilis has ever entered *my* social orbit.’

24th. Syphilitic barber dies. He is all alone save for a lame father, and none of the Gonds may touch his body, not because he was syphilitic but because he was a barber. So Shamrao and I with two very brave villagers (who risk excommunication for it) carry his body to the grave. He is very light.

25th. A feast of goat for the children in the school to-day. All goes well till I find that the Mahunt (or Archbishop) of a rather despised caste called Meheras has made all the Chamar children (Chamars being even more despised) sit separately on a pile of stones. We lose our tempers over this and take our own food to the stones and eat with great pleasure among the Chamars, who are by far the prettiest

children in the school. Tell the Archbishop that he will undoubtedly be reborn a pig in his next incarnation. He wags his impenetrable whiskers at me, but notice that ever since he has looked a trifle uneasy when the conversation has turned on eschatological matters.

27th. In the middle of the morning, tremendous clamour in jungle, and presently Gond girl appears running towards our house with a great cloud of bees above her. People rush for shelter in all directions, but a courageous constable takes two of our blankets, throws one over himself and one round the girl, and sits down with her in the middle of the swarm. He makes her keep absolutely still, and after a little while the bees fly away. Her body so covered with stings that it looks like a field of wheat; Shamrao removes them and rubs in some lotion. Everyone declares her certain to die, but in a day or two she recovers.

28th. Toothache persevering so persistently that decide to go to Nagpur and see about it. Start with Shamrao early in the morning. Stop for ten minutes in small Tehsil town and are surrounded by an eager crowd. In this brief space am given the following commissions: (1) to persuade the Commissioner to withdraw twelve criminal cases against a certain oppressive landlord; (2) to ask the Principal of one of our Colleges to cook the marks and allow a youth who thinks he has failed to pass his exam.; (3) to get someone a job as a Railway Guard; and (4) to petition Government to reduce the land-revenue by half. No time to explain that even if I could I would do none of these things, so content myself with nodding cheerily at one and all, and pressing the accelerator.

29th. Go in state of utter terror to the best dentist in Nagpur, our Provincial capital. Dismayed to find dirty, ill-lighted and cobwebby waiting-room, whose walls are

covered with amazing selection of diplomas, photos of Jawarhalal Nehru and the King, diagrams of the human mouth in health and sickness, and some very alluring coloured prints of amorous couples in what seem to be anticipatory attitudes. Not quite so bad as the Chinese combined Dentist and Barber whom I once visited in Raipur (going for a hair-cut I got into the wrong chair by mistake) but nearly. Dentist himself, however, very efficient and charming. Have taken precaution of bringing with me chaperone highly connected with Government to see that I am treated right, but on getting into chair find with horror that dentist is an ardent Congressman. All now depends on whether he will work off his feelings about Government on my person, or whether he is truly imbued with the gentle and non-violent spirit of Mahatma Gandhi. Hastily changing my political coat I remind him of my friendship with the latter which seems to please him, and he begins to pump enormous quantities of stuff into my gums, laughing heartily every time I make a remark. This far from normal reaction to my conversation almost makes me forget the solemn task on which we are engaged, when suddenly he wheels round upon me, an expression of sadistic fury contorting his amiable features and thrusts a great Pincer into my face. Pushing him away, I declare that I am not yet psychologically adjusted, but in a minute or two shut my eyes tight and bid him do his worst. There is a loud rending noise and when I look again dentist is waving an enormous tusk to and fro, and all is over. Dentist asks only five rupees for this, which rather hurts my feelings. In view of all it meant to me, it hardly seems an adequate charge.

30th. In spite of agonising toothache, go in the morning to see the new Messiah who is visiting Nagpur. He has chosen, I think mistakenly, to stay with an Inspector of

Boilers. Go with Hindu friend in some trepidation, but find enormous crowds surrounding the house, and only with great difficulty push our way into a sort of pantry. Here great baskets of creature-comforts for the Master are arriving every moment, and we sit on dirty mattress until very efficient person, perhaps the I. of B. himself, takes me by the hand and says I can have Just a Minute, but I must go at once. I am pushed into a big room, packed with beautifully dressed young women, and see the Messiah, a sleek elegantly attired person in an easy chair, whose feet are being massaged by a youth in full European dress. The Master raises a hand in blessing, and I achieve what is not quite a genuflexion and yet not quite not a genuflexion, and nearly fall over. Conversation is impossible as the Master has not spoken—probably very wise of him—for the past twelve years. We stumble out, and as we go Hindu friend remarks, ‘It almost makes one feel there is something to be said for the lean and strenuous personality of Jesus.’ In the evening dine with the Governor. Am in such an ecstasy of toothache that I cannot see how I am to get through the evening. But while dressing take twenty-five grains of aspirin and follow this with six cocktails taken very quick, with the result that I feel on top of the world all through dinner and am only slightly embarrassed on coming to and finding myself telling H. E. quite firmly exactly how the Province ought to be governed.

31st. Return home to the jungle in great content.

Mandla District, Central India.

PRIEST ERRANT.

BY D. K. BROSTER.

(1)

WE all know—or used to know, for it is not so often encountered in these more sophisticated days—the historical novel written in the first person singular which begins something after this style : ‘I, Francis Clutterbuck, gentleman, of the county of Hampshire, being now come to the age of three-score years, am minded to set down in writing for my children the strange happenings which befell me in my youth, whereby, as you shall hear . . .’ and so on.

If only the man—real, not fictitious—who left behind him that inimitable record of those years of his middle life which he entitled *A Breiffe Narration of the Services done to Three Noble Ladyes by Gilbert Blakhal, Preist of the Scots Mission, in France, in the Low Countries and in Scotland* had left us also some details of his youth and his later days ! In this partial autobiography the curtain lifts abruptly, and with a somewhat startling effect, when Father Blackhall must already have been in his late thirties or early forties, and falls, to all intents and purposes, eighteen years later, although it is clear that he was over seventy when he penned this vivid and entertaining apologia.

For an apologia it is. Had not the third of his noble ladies treated him, according to his own showing, with the grossest ingratitude, we should to-day be the poorer by the loss of a series of adventures and encounters almost as lively as Dumas at his best, and possessing in addition the advan-

tage of having really happened and having been written down in the epoch and country of d'Artagnan himself. Indeed, the main part of the *Narration* more or less covers the period between the end of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and the opening of *Vingt Ans Après*, when Louis XIII occupied the French throne and Charles I the English. But Father Blackhall was no Aramis ; he had nothing to do with intrigues either political or amatory, and if he carried weapons and assumed false names, it was only in order that he might fulfil the obligations which he took upon himself towards the three Scottish ladies of rank whom he successively assisted : Lady Isabel Hay, her sister Sophia, Countess of Aboyne, and Lady Henrietta Gordon, the latter's daughter.

But the more pugnacious portions of the *Narration*—and Gilbert Blackhall, a gentleman born, was jealous of his honour and not naturally of a meek disposition—do gain a certain piquancy from the fact that he was in holy orders. Piquancy of another sort also is lent by the excessively staid outward appearance of his record, published as it was in the middle of last century by a Scottish historical society, and clothed in the drab livery of such publications. It is therefore at once a refreshment and a surprise, when one opens this dull-looking volume near the beginning, to come upon these words :

' But I did take him by the shoulders, and pushed him downe again upon his cheere, saying : No, the devil cute your feete away, sir, if you winne away so . . . Thou cut throts with him ! Thou durst not cut the throat of a mouse if she would but only turn her head towards thee ! '

The man who possessed this vigorous turn of phrase was born some time during the last decade of the sixteenth century, presumably in Aberdeenshire, where he had several cousins of his name. He makes no mention of any nearer

relatives. From the scanty records of the Scottish College at Rome we know that he entered it in 1626, and was ordained priest on Easter Eve, 1630. The College had been founded in 1600 by Pope Clement VIII in order to train Scottish Roman Catholic youths for the priesthood, and thence the majority of them returned, furtively and at considerable risk, to minister to their co-religionists in their now Presbyterian native land, since between 1580 and 1600 Scotland had been taken possession of as a missionary country by members of the Jesuit, Benedictine and other orders. But though Blackhall had studied under a Jesuit superior he was not a member of the Order; he was a secular, a 'priest of the Scots Mission.'

It has already been said that but for ingratitude shown to him the *Narration* would never have been written. It is dedicated in biting terms to 'Madame de Gordon . . . now dame d'attour to Madame'—that is, to Charles II's sister, the Duchess of Orléans, the 'Minette' of history and *Royal Flush*.

'Thinking within myself,' says the writer, 'to whom I could most conveniently offer this smal labour, I did not find any now living who can pretend so great right unto it as your owne selfe. First, because the greatest and most difficile actions mentioned in it do reguarde you, and were taken for your profeit, both spirituel and temporel. Secondly, because you seame not to know that ever I did you any services at al, or to undervalue them very much . . .'

It cannot of course be denied that the whole of the *Breiffe Narration* (which is very far from being brief) is coloured by the purpose for which it was written, but, since the reader is well aware of the motive which inspired Father Blackhall to enter at such length into all he did and suffered and spent on behalf of his Noble Ladies, this does not greatly

matter. And in all its two hundred and fifteen closely printed quarto pages there is not a dull sentence ; indeed, the problem is how to select among so much racy material, and to refrain from perpetual quotation. The style, clear, easy and naturally picturesque, though not concise, suffers immensely from compression or paraphrase. A curious and favourite locution of Father Blackhall's is the adding of the syllable 'un' to a participle, instead of using the word 'without'—thus, 'unbidding her farewell,' 'ungoing through the town,' 'unwept many salt teares.' Embedded too in his pages are many more words of French origin than are found in the ordinary Scots vernacular, and one has the impression that he just 'lifted' them for his own use without any intention of writing French. Thus he never speaks of anyone's 'aunt,' but always of a 'tante,' as though no other name for the relationship existed, and writes of being 'crazed' under a horse because, most likely, the word 'écrasé' was what came naturally into his mind. After all, by the time he wrote his recital he had lived long in France, although he admits that when he first came to Paris from Rome he spoke Italian with more ease than French, and when he made his double journey to Brussels on behalf of Lady Isabel Hay he passed himself off as an Italian.

We do not know exactly why and when he did first come to Paris, but at any rate he was settled there, as chaplain to an old lawyer named Dorsay, by the June of 1631, little more than a year after his ordination. And in that year Lady Isabel Hay was brought to Paris from Dieppe by Mr. James Forbes, a Scot of good repute living in France, who was acting as her banker. Lady Isabel, a daughter of the Roman Catholic Earl of Errol, Hereditary Constable of Scotland, a young woman in her twenties, had come with her father's consent to France, intending to enter the cloister,

which she naturally could not do in Scotland. And Mr. Forbes, casting about for a confessor for her, bethought him of his cousin Gilbert Blackhall, and introduced him to Lady Isabel in that capacity—‘which,’ adds Father Blackhall succinctly, ‘he did repent thereafter.’ For Lady Isabel’s spiritual guide not only put a stop to Mr. Forbes’s design of marrying her, but showed him up as having slandered her when she objected to his attentions. Space will not permit of setting forth the details of this complicated, diverting and hot-tempered affair—they fill twelve pages—which began with what Father Blackhall admits to have been a public brawl and ended by Lady Isabel, who supported her champion throughout, retiring for a year into a convent near Paris. It may however be mentioned that the gentleman of whose throat-cutting capabilities the priest thought so poorly was not Mr. Forbes himself, but a fellow-countryman of the French King’s Scottish bodyguard : and one may retain, for its colour, this bit of old Paris.

‘I do remember yet very wel, althought it was wel threttie and four yeares ago, our disput was upon a Monday, betwixt eight and nyne houres in the morning. The laird of Craig Gordon and his ladye were loged then in the great rue of St. Jacques Faubourg, at the signe of the golden fleur de lys, forder out then St. Magloir, on the other syd of the streat.’

After six months of the nunnery Lady Isabel found that she was not, after all, fitted for the religious life, and wrote to Father Blackhall, with whom she had kept in touch, asking whether he knew any who could procure for her from the Infanta Isabella, the Regent of the Spanish Netherlands, a stall in the college of lay canonesses at Mons. Otherwise she would rather earn her bread by her needle than

return to Scotland to be married to a heretic—for her father was now dead, and her brother had threatened to cut off supplies if she did not come back. ‘This needle,’ writes her late confessor, ‘did pearce my heart, for I loved her sincerely for her virtue without any interest.’

The enquiries made of a friend in Brussels showed that the chances of a foreign lady entering one of these institutions were exceedingly small, since noblemen of the country who put down their daughters’ names for a stall before the girls were in their teens could hardly procure one. But Lady Isabel was so set upon the project that she begged Father Blackhall to go to Brussels himself and see the Infanta in person. So the good man, obtaining leave of absence from M. Dorsay, took his place in the ‘coche of Antwerp,’ and on the 10th of August set out upon his nine days’ journey from Paris to Brussels.

It is curious to reflect how accessible were the rulers of those days to quite humble petitioners, if the latter had sufficient money and knew how to bestow it to the best advantage. But it cost Father Blackhall at least four gold pistoles from his scanty store before he succeeded in getting an audience of the Infanta, and uttering the harangue on the subject of Lady Isabel which he had spent a week in composing. It must have been eloquent, for the Regent promised that the young Scottish lady should have the first benefice to fall vacant, and meanwhile she was to come to her in Brussels. Very prudently Father Blackhall requested that this invitation, or command, should be put in writing, that no opening might be given to ill-disposed persons to say that she was running away with a priest. This the Infanta agreed to do, but since her secretary was ill, and his clerk showed an extraordinary disinclination to write the letter for the Regent’s signature, Father Blackhall’s purse

was still emptier when, after a fortnight's further delay, he at last left Brussels.

At Mons he not unnaturally took the opportunity of seeing the college of canonesses which Lady Isabel aspired to enter. These ladies were not, of course, nuns, nor did they even live in community, but several together. Father Blackhall, who was taken to one of their dwellings, reports that they were

'lyk angelles in the church, as wel for the modestie of their behaviour, as for the whitness of their pure Hollande habit . . . which is drawn upon their secular habit, which they pul of when they come from the church to their logings ; and out of the church are clothed modestly as secular ladyes, with their *queuffeure a la mode*. They are very civil and affable, and so wysse that none in a hundreth year do play the foole, although they have great libertye and useth to go in company to civil recreations. They come to the church in sommer at fyve hours, and at six in winter and sing all the houres as chanoins do.'

And all the while, as they had no expenses, their dowries went on augmenting against the day of marriage.

His next experience was not so pleasant ; yet it was far from uncommon. In the seventeenth century the roads of France and the Low Countries must have been nearly as dangerous—if from a different cause—as our own to-day, for (at least whenever Father Blackhall travelled them) they were swarming with robbers of every degree. And as the priest, having failed to procure a horse, rode in a peasant's cart from Mons to Maubeuge in company with the peasant's daughter, who was returning from selling whey at Mons with forty crowns in her pocket, the journey being incredibly prolonged because the carter insisted upon calling at every one of the sixteen or so beerhouses on the way, the cart was stopped in a wood near Maubeuge by two horsemen demand-

ing money. Sitting in the cart, from which the horse had been removed, with a carabine at his breast, Father Blackhall held the highwaymen in parley while the girl slipped home unnoticed with her money. After a while, though they continued to threaten him with death, he 'began to be weary to be keeped so long their prisonnier, and with the back of my hand I chopped upon the breast of him who had his carabine at mine'—to find out, he said, whose doublet was the harder. 'We squabled there awhile'—the dispute is given in full—'and squabbling came friends again.' In the end Gilbert Blackhall let them have three crowns, half of his store, and they went their way. But what mortified him more than this loss was that the owner of the cart, whose daughter and money he had saved, insisted upon his paying the full stipulated price for his journey.

Back in Paris, he procured a lodging for Lady Isabel. It was harder to find money for her journey to Brussels, and an expedition to Dieppe in search of a loan proved fruitless. It was November before enough was got together. Then the priest took four places in the Antwerp coach, for himself and Lady Isabel, her waiting woman Matilda Kempe, and Alexander Davidson, an old gentleman of her father's who attended her at his own charge, and they set out, through days grown shorter and over roads made heavy by rain. Brussels was reached on the eleventh day, when they were 'wearied enough being so long tyme tosted to and fro, up and downe, and from syde to syde in the coche, wars than in a shipe, except that the smel of the sea is worse,' finishes Father Blackhall rather unexpectedly. But his feeling words remind us that the coaches of those days had no springs. 'I did admire how she was able to endure that tormoile so many dayes, from one or two houres before day, until night.'

Having got his noble lady safely to Brussels Father Blackhall next sought to know when the Infanta would receive her. The princess fixed the 25th of November, three days ahead, and enquired if the suppliant possessed suitable clothing for her audience. Inspired, he felt, by Lady Isabel's good angel, the priest replied that she had one gown of Naples taffeta and another of tabby, both new, so that there was—luckily, as it turned out afterwards—no need for her presentation to be delayed, and a coach was ordered for the appointed day. But when that day came Lady Isabel, to his consternation, began to say that she would prefer to postpone her audience, which caused the harassed priest to read her a lecture about playing fast and loose with the great, especially if they were Spaniards. Fortunately, the coach arriving at the door, he managed to get her into it, and the young lady went off to her audience where, having knelt (or as Father Blackhall always puts it, 'sat upon her knees') during the Infanta's dinner answering questions, she was definitely promised the first vacant canonicate at Mons, the Infanta proposing meanwhile to keep her at court with herself.

The four travellers were very joyful all the rest of that day, as can well be imagined, and made merry before a good fire. Alas, the morrow was not so joyful, for news came that the Infanta had fallen sick 'of a great fever.' Five days later, when Father Blackhall paid his daily visit to the palace in quest of news, he found the gate shut, and knew at once that Isabella Clara Eugenia of Spain was no longer on earth, and that with her had almost certainly departed his charge's chance of a stall in the college of canonesses.

He was terribly distressed, even to tears. 'All that day, as oft as I did look upon her I could not hinder myself from

falling in most violent quints of weeping.' Indeed, for the next two months, tormented as he was with uncertainty as to whether the Infanta had left any instructions in her will about the Scottish girl—which appeared most unlikely—he 'fand not rest night nor day . . . so that I did oft tymes ryse in the morning with my bonnes more wearye than they were when I did go to bedde.' Every day he went in quest of information to one or other of the seven members of the Council of Regency, and once paid a visit to the late Infanta's confessor, since he had been with her in her last hours. He was not well received.

'He was a Spanish Cordelier, the most rustick and rude ambitious and envyous fellow that ever I did speak with in al my lyff. I went to his chamber at the Cordeliers, hoping to learne something from him. I spock to him with as much respect as if he had bein primat. He made no answer. I thought it was becaus he was going to say messe. I waited upon him after messe. He ranne to his chamber; I followed, he rapped too his dore upon my nose. I chopped douselye, no answer; then I chopped harder, no answer. At last I rapped with my foote, then, said he, who is that so rude at my dore? One, said I, who has something to say to you. Then he came and halfe opened his dore, and 'as I began to conjure him, he said, *Nihil sum, nihil scio*; . . . and saying that, shut his dore againe.'

And meanwhile old Alexander Davidson was urging Lady Isabel to return, either to France or to Scotland, before she was driven, as he put it, to sell her clothes and go back naked.

But when, on Candlemas Day, the Infanta's will was read, it was found that she *had* remembered Lady Isabel. A codicil directed not only that she was to have the first vacant stall at Mons, but that a fund was to be set aside from the sale of the Infanta's effects to support her in the meantime, and she was in addition recommended to the fatherly

care of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Malines. Father Blackhall's labours, time and money were not thrown away after all. His joy was great, even though he heard that his employer in Paris had taken a new chaplain in his place, and he was himself, as usual, hard up. At the sale of the Infanta's jewels and effects ('the vent of her Majesties meubles')

'I did,' he confesses ruefully, 'as I have oft tymes done in the faire of St. Germain, behold many fyne things, and wish myself able to buy them; but, for want of moneys, leave them to others, for I was very scant. I had non but what I got for saying the first Messe every morning, at Notre Dame *de bone successe*, a chaple of great devotion.'

And at last, on Easter Tuesday, he took his leave of Lady Isabel, 'with many tears flowing from my eyes but non from hers.' Unwillingly he consented to receive from her a fifth of the money which the Archbishop had advanced to her, and so left, 'very melancholious and in a bade humeur.'

Alexander Davidson convoyed him out of Brussels, but even while they were drinking a farewell glass at a tavern, on the outskirts, in a room whence the traveller was able to see his horse tied to the door, he observed three riders going his way whose aspect did not please him. He lingered to allow them to get ahead, but to no avail, for 'when I did go out of the Fauxbourg as far as the flight of an arrow, I did see them among hillocks waiting for me.' Priming his two pistols, he rode forward to meet them, but upon their declaring that they were not robbers, but soldiers asking for alms, he gave them six sols for a pot of beer, being careful to bestow it from a distance, with outstretched hand.

On the fifth day he arrived in Paris in sunshine, and going in to salute M. Dorsay as he passed along the rue de Ste Croix, found himself received with joy, since the chaplain whom the old lawyer had taken in his place had gone away the day before, '*mal satisfait*, which made him love me the more, who had never complained.' So there he was back again, as if he had never left, having accomplished, into the bargain, all that he had been striving to do for his dear Lady Isabel since the previous summer.

But that satisfaction was to be his only reward. Her future now assured, the girl for whom he had done so much, like her niece years later, never showed the least gratitude—on the contrary. The reason is curious. In pursuance of a promise made to a friend of both his and hers, that Craig Gordon who had his lodging at the sign of the golden fleur de lys, and who had now returned to Scotland, Father Blackhall had written him a full account of the Brussels expedition and its success, which Craig Gordon sent on to the Hay family. Lord Errol in consequence wrote to his sister congratulating her, praising Father Blackhall, and promising him his patronage should he ever come to Scotland; on which Lady Isabel straightway wrote to the priest accusing him of being 'very bussie seeking thanks from her frindes for the service that I had done for her, and that I should have expected until such tym as she had wreaten to them.' To this Gilbert Blackhall, greatly wounded, replied that he never had written to any of her kindred, that he sought no thanks or reward from her family nor from her, and that if ever he went to Scotland he would 'abstean from her noble parents' (that is, relations) as much as he could. He never heard again from Lady Isabel, nor, as he afterwards discovered, did she so much as name him in her letters home.

But Father Blackhall kept his word, and carefully ‘absteined’ from the kindred of the ungrateful Canoness when, in the summer of 1637, he went as an itinerant mission priest to his native Aberdeenshire—for it was in the north of Scotland that the great Catholic families, like the Gordons of Huntly, were strong enough to be little molested. He led for a time an existence neither easy nor lucrative, going with more or less of secrecy from one gentleman’s house to another, to minister at each once a month, but subsisting the rest of the time at his own expense, and always liable to arrest. That there were other dangers too this account of his immersion one cold January day in flood-water bears witness.

‘My hors did dumpe down in a very deepe hole of a brook, at the entrie of the brook into the water. I was not myndful to passe over the water, but only over the brook, for the water was over al the bankes in a thaw. The hole was deepe and narrow, and my hors, seeking to go out, could not reach his former feet to the bank, but did fal backwards, and I under him, and ther we struggled a ful quarter of an houre ; my head deepe under the water. I opened my mouth often tymes to have air to breathe, but found nothing but water, whereof I swallowed many mouthfull. Stil working myself out under my hors, and seeking to win above him [I] did hold him downe with both my handes at the saddle, and he, so droven downe, did keepe me under him, until such tym as, he working on way and I another contrary, both the sadle girthes did bracke, and so the sadle came to me, and the hors wan to his feet, and, by the providence of God, he did go out against the stream, and I, holding him by the taille, did follow out ; if he had gone with the streame he would have entered the Water of Ylay, and so perished, and I with him . . . When we were both at land, I did perceave my sadle and a grate

valise tyed to it going downe towards the river ; I did go in againe and draw it to the lande. Then I see my hat and a little valise of red Spanish ledder, wherein was my masse vestments, swimming towards the river. I returned in once againe to the head, and brought them out, thinking with myself that the people and ministers would perswade themselves, finding these vestments, that some preist had been drowned in that river and rejoyce therat. I was more than a great myle from the house wher I intended to go, and al my clothes and bootes were scooped ful of water, which made me heavie to go on foote, and forced me to take my hors ; and when I was upon him, without anything to tye my saddle to him, totering from syde to syde upon his back, the cold (for I was trembling) forced me to tak to my feet ; so from hors to foote and from foote to hors, many times changing . . . The cold, which was lyke to kil me, did not suffer me to stay waiting for a guyd, although then every brook was become a river, and every river a sea ; for the snow, before the thaw, did go to the midst of a man's theigh.'

But he was destined, after all, to have more dealings with the Hays. Lady Isabel's sister, Sophia, Countess of Aboyne, seven years widowed of the young Gordon husband who had perished in that mysterious affair, the 'burning of Frendraught,' heard from Alexander Davidson, now in her service, of Father Blackhall's presence in Aberdeenshire, and out of gratitude made more than one effort to get into touch with him. Although he was still smarting under Lady Isabel's imputation he was obliged in the end to yield to her sister's entreaties, and not only visited the house of that 'discrete, kynd and thankful lady' but, after an interval, accepted the post of chaplain there, the previous holder of this post, being of a 'beiarre humouer,' having gone away and left her without a priest. He remained from July, 1638, until Lady Aboyne's death nearly four years later, rendering

her not only spiritual assistance but financial and military as well, striving to keep her from being cheated by her tenants, and her house from being raided by Highland marauders, in which last object he was singularly and zestfully successful. Nor did he suffer from any lack of gratitude on the part of 'this truly noble and religious ladye,' who averred that he was not only her chaplain but her steward and the 'captain of her castle' as well.

But in March, 1642, Lady Aboyne, still only in her mid-thirties, died of 'a languishing fever' which had seized upon her six months previously. All this time she had been devoutly preparing for death, and every week, when Father Blackhall had given her absolution, she would implore him, before she rose from her knees, not to abandon her young fatherless daughter among heretics, but to visit her and keep her in the Catholic religion and save her soul if he could.

(3)

And thus we come to the third and last of the Three Noble Ladyes, Henrietta Gordon, aged not quite thirteen at her mother's death, for whom Father Blackhall was to risk his life, and of whom he could write in his old age, 'You are and ever wil be esteemed the most unnatural and unthankful woman in the whole world.'

As this child, however, was at once sent to relations to be brought up a Protestant, it was impossible for him to fulfil his promise to her dead mother unless he could by some means get her removed from Scotland. He therefore resolved to return to France and try to work upon her grandmother, the dowager Marchioness of Huntly, who had just retired thither, to send for her. His purse, as usual, was very light (for he had steadfastly opposed Lady Aboyne's desire to leave him a legacy), but he got together sufficient

money and went to take farewell of the girl, then lying sick of the smallpox, riding through a night so dark that had his horse not been white he could not have seen its head, and having earlier in the day a long and unpleasant experience at an inn full of soldiers, 'as drunck as beastes.' It is only fair to say that he might have extricated himself sooner but for his own hot temper, for when their captain asked him, 'in a commanding way,' who he was, Gilbert Blackhall replied that that was a question to have asked of his footman, had he possessed one, not of him. The captain said that it was 'a civile demande, and I said it might passe for such to a vallet, but not to a gentleman. He said it was civile, and I said it was not.' The two nearly came to blows, and the situation continued acute for hours, as the traveller obstinately refused to give any account of himself—his blood, as he rather oddly puts it, being 'not yet come to a good temperament' after the recent death of Lady Aboyne. All the while his mass vestments, which, if found, would have been his undoing, were in his valise, though the valise had luckily not remained fastened to his saddle, because it was too bulky to pass through the very low stable door. He was, in his own words, 'embarassed in this bruterie from tenne of the clock in the morning until fyve afternoone.'

The night after his visit to the sick child—no thought of infection seems to have troubled him during the seven or eight hours he spent with her, when he gave her and her serving-woman communion—his horse had the misfortune to be 'stinged with an edder in the breast,' which resulted in a mysterious lameness. On arrival at Aberdeen, knowing that enquiries had been set on foot about him by Covenanting ministers, the priest went at once, under the name of Captain King, on board a ship bound for Holland, and

though she was not sailing at once remained immured there, 'tosled up and down' for six days, giving out that he wished to avoid his too hospitable acquaintances in the town. At Veere in Holland he transhipped to a Dutch man of war, having first invited her commander and some of his officers to a breakfast which appears somehow to have lasted until midnight, when the priest convoyed the Dutch captain back to his own door, 'lyk a ladye, my hand under his arme, to keepe him from falling (for he was exceiding drunk).'

On his return to Paris he had the good luck to be offered a post as tutor to the only son of a widow of means in Normandy, which he was glad to accept. But the child in Scotland and his promise to her mother 'of happy memory' were ever in his thoughts, and when he found that the dowager Lady Huntly refused to bestir herself at all in the matter, he resolved to lay the case before the Queen of France herself, indeed to go 'to every Catholic princesse in Europe' until he obtained 'maintenance for this noble child to be bredde in some Catholick Contrie, wherby her soule may be sauved.' Accordingly he asked for leave of absence from his pupil and betook himself to St. Germain, where the Court then lay, and where lodging was in consequence so dear that he was forced to make shift with but one meal a day, at nine in the evening. He contrived to get access to the Queen through the good offices of a pious lady in waiting, yet when Anne of Austria came into the room unattended he actually took her for one of the maids of honour, since, in the early forties though she was,

'she was so well fearedd [made up] and so lyk a French belle brunette (as they say) of six or seaven and twenty years and so smal in the midle, and so strait in her gowne, which she did to please the King, that I did persuaide myself she could not be the Queene.'

Moved by the petitioner's account of the 'most destitute orphan' abandoned to the care of heretics, the Queen agreed, with the King's permission, to write a letter bidding her come to France. Moreover, Louis XIII, becoming interested, proposed to write himself, which would have rendered the Queen's letter unnecessary, had not the far-seeing Father Blackhall bethought him that if the King, 'whose couleur was lyk a piece of lead,' should die before he could bring the child out of Scotland—which was precisely what happened—his letter would be of little avail. He therefore solicited for a letter from the Queen as well, on the ground of the child's sex; his real motive, he felt, being better concealed. Of these royal letters he had ten copies made, and despatched them to Scotland, to the Marquis of Huntly, Lady Henrietta's uncle, some of her aunts and other Catholics who might take steps to send her over.

Yet after the copies had gone Father Blackhall began to think that it would be more satisfactory if he went in person to Scotland with the originals. For, as he very justly reflected, 'Letters being once redde, are ordinarily casten by, and not mor looked upon, and cannot stand up and say, reid me yet over againe.' He knew too—and was to know even better thereafter—how indifferent Lord Huntly was to his niece's spiritual welfare. But to go to Scotland upon such an errand was to take his life in his hand, since it was a capital crime to remove a child of her rank from the country. Yet his conscience would not let him abandon her. 'My hart was never so basse, nor by the grace of God shal ever be, as to saue my life with the losse of my honor.'

Because his stay at St. Germain had cost him so much he was forced to pawn his cassock and his new long cloak of Chalons cloth. He bought instead a new suit and cloak of

grey Berry serge ; and, as he meant to go by way of his pupil's home in Normandy, hired a horse which seems to have been the most extraordinary animal ever bestridden save in a bad dream.

‘ I would not have plained the moneyes, if the hors had been as good as he was lyk to have bein, for he was as great as a coach hors, but the most lasche jadde [jade] that ever any man crossed. For I might sooner have killed him with my spurres then made him trötte, much less gallope. Then his head was so heavie and great, and his neck so weak, that it could not bear the weight of his head, but lette it falle ordinarily in betwixt his two forther lygges, and falle his croupe over his head, with danger to bruse me under his back, and when I did hold his head a little streat, his mouth being tender, he [did] caber upon his heeles, and fal backward, so as I did not know in what posture to kepe him. I have descryved him thus at length to show the reader that it was God and not myself that sauved me that I was not crazed under him, haveing fallen under me sex or seven tymes, betwixt Paris and Rouen, and that in the fairest way, rather then in the rochest [roughest]. But as oft as he did fale, God gave me the grace to throw myself some space from him, so as he did not touch me, except the first tym in Poissy, wher, stumbling forward, I did hold up his head to keep him unfallen, and he gyrt upon his hinder feet and fell backward upon the caussy, and I under his back, so as the people came running to me, thinking I had bein killed. I had indeed some bruises, caused by the saddle, and the garde of my sword, yet did mount again, and road that day to Boisdennemetz against night, wher I stayed from Saturday night until Monday morning.’

Here he suggested to Mme. de Boisdennemetz, his pupil's mother, that he should give up his post, from which he had already been absent six weeks, but she refused to accept his resignation, so attached had her son already become to him. She would await his return. ‘ Madame,’ said he to this,

‘ my voyage will be long and hazardous, for my errand is criminal. . . . Monsieur, said she, ther be few in the world now of your trempe. Wher shal we find another now who would mak such a voyage, with the hazard of his lyffe, for to succour an orphanline?’ Unasked, she thereupon advanced him forty pistoles.

When our priest errant once more took the road to Dieppe and Scotland upon his ‘unworthy hors’ he was, one must admit, well armed.

‘ I had behind my saddle a great cloack bagge, in which wer my new cloathes and cloack, and a new hatte, and at the torre of my saddle two Dutch pistolettes with wheele workes, and at my two sydes two Scots pistolettes with snape workes, and a very wyd musketon, charged with nynne pistolet balles, hinging from my neck, and a good sworde at my side. To be short, if my hors had bein serviable, I would not have feared any one man’—which seems evident—‘ but knowing the inhability of my hors, I was not without apprehension of the worst.’

He had not, in fact, gone a league before he met four horsemen, ‘ as franc voleurs as any were in al France.’ As they divided in a very sinister fashion in order to pass on either side of him he made up his mind how best to employ this lavish armoury, but, strangely enough, none of the riders offered to molest or even spoke to him. ‘ They looked grievously upon me, I siclyk upon them, for I believe nather of us was fain of another.’

But at Dieppe, which was not reached without several further alarms, Father Blackhall had to wait two months, for in none of the first four ships sailing thence to Scotland dared he embark, as they held passengers to whom he was known. And one night he had a ‘ feareful dreame’ which, since the late Lady Aboyne appeared in it, he regarded as

some kind of a prophetic vision. It was certainly of excellent nightmare quality.

‘I thought that I was going to Scotland, and in my way, I thought that I did find myself suddenly upon a marvelous great precipice, a whole liggue of lenth, haveing at my left hand an rock of that lenth, and as heigh as the steeples or toures of Notre Dame at Paris, and as straight up ; and at my right hand a precipice along the rock, and deip as the rock was heigh ; and the way betwixt the rock and the precipice no broader then the breadth of my foote . . . which affrighted me most, because, standing on my left foot, and my right foote in the aire, above the precipice, for want of place to sette it on, which I could not find unles I would sette the inner side of it crosse to the rock, which, if I should doe, I could not move any more, for my left foote could never passe between the rock and my legge unthrowing me downe in the precipice . . . Then I thought that I said, Jesus, how am I come thus in the midst of this precipice, or how shal I winne out of it. And looking down into the deipth, I [did] sie many bones of men and horses who had fallen downe in it, and so perished ; and loking upon theis terrible things I beganne to faunte, and said to myself, heir I sie I must end my lyffe, for my hart did never give over until now in any danger that ever did befall me. And . . . bowing to falle downe I heard a voice calling and saying to me, Feare not, feare not : I am come to sauve you . . . I looked to sie who was it that called so, and I perceived that it was my Lady Aboyne . . . comeing very nimbly along the sid of the rock, notwithstanding the narownes of the way. . . . I thought I did sie her juste as she used to go when she was liveing, with a great mourning vail of black taffetas.’

Lady Aboyne took his hand in hers and led him to the end of the precipice, encouraging him,

‘and at the end thereof did show me a towne, with a large castel above the towne, and said your way wil be to goe

through that towne but do it not, for if you goe through it you wil be in as great danger ther as you have bein heir, and I wil not be able to sauve you ther, as I have done heir. And befor she parted from me said, tak my child with you out of Scotland . . . and euanished out of my sight.'

Another Scots priest then in Dieppe to whom he told his dream endeavoured to dissuade him from going to Scotland in consequence, but was met with the reply, ' Arryve what God wil, I shal do my duetye.' And a few days later, upon April 1st, the adventurer embarked, having a narrow escape of never reaching the deck of the ship at all, for his foot slipped as he was just clambering over the bulwark, and he fell down on to the thwarts of the boat below, escaping luckily with a few bruises which, when he came at last to Berwick he rubbed to their advantage with 'oile of hypericon, or mille pertuis.'

But neither Berwick nor any other port seemed at one time likely to be reached. Although the sea was at first like a 'loghe,' for smoothness, a terrible tempest arose on the fifth day, Palm Sunday, and continued until the Tuesday, with mountainous waves and snow so thick that one end of the ship was blotted out from the other. Father Blackhall's account, embracing the behaviour of all on board, is hair-raising but much too long to quote ; he appears to have given much salutary advice to the captain (who had completely lost his head), although he was himself convinced that his last hour was come, and that God did not intend him to rescue Henrietta Gordon. Yet in the end the ship not only miraculously escaped being driven by the furious wind on to a lee shore—the coast of Yorkshire—but was conducted in spite of it 'as if she had been ledde by a rope, the space of two miles, with al her sails up, and ful of side wind' to the narrow entrance of the harbour of Holy

Island, where the sea opened itself like two walls to give her passage, closing again behind her. A vessel of Yarmouth, following close behind, was unable to enter, and later became a total wreck with all on board, 'so that not a plank of her over four foot in length came ashore' nor a body that was not dismembered. Yet a case full of beaver hats with gold hatbands seems to have been cast up intact, for the parish minister, a Scotsman named Lindsay and a gentleman of the neighbourhood came to blows over it, 'and the minister did sore wound the gentleman.'

Once in Edinburgh Father Blackhall contrived to see Lady Henrietta at the house of the Marchioness of Douglas, her aunt, though the child was actually living with her cousin the Countess of Haddington, who, having become a 'precise Puritane,' was much opposed, on the score of religion, to her charge's going to France, even to serve the Queen. It was necessary to interview the girl before proceeding further, since she could not be removed from Scotland against her own will.

'How soon I did sie her, so much cheanged from that child which she was during the lyffle of her deare mother, I could not conteane my teares, and she, seing me weepe for her, did weepe, letting her head fall downe on my breast, and in that posture we did shedde many salt teares together.'

When he asked her whether she was willing to go to France she replied 'discreetly' that she could not take a step so important without the advice of her guardian, Lord Huntly; so, as the Marquis's consent had in any case to be obtained, Father Blackhall set out for Aberdeenshire on Easter Eve to obtain it. It must not be forgotten that the Great Civil War had now been in progress for nearly eight months, since the raising of King Charles's standard at Nottingham in the previous August, and that this fact was

not likely to make any part of the priest's dangerous mission any easier or less dangerous.

He arrived at Leith, where he had intended to cross the Forth, just at midnight. ('Twelfe houres chopped as I did enter Leith.') It was therefore Sunday morning, a most inopportune time for travellers in Presbyterian Scotland, for,

'our Puritans were at that time more as half Jewes, for they had forbidden al servile work to be done from Saterday at noone, until the next Monday, under great penalties, so that a boat durste not go upon ferries, to pass any man over, what pressant affair soever he could have, and, therefore, I could not passe at Leith, or returne again to Edenbrough, specially upon their day of general communion, becaus theis dayes they send searchers to al the innes to sie who are their absent from their churches ; and, if any be found, the hostes are finned for logging them or suffering them to be absent.'

Being unable to get passage at Queensferry either, he decided to ride to the bridge at Stirling, four and twenty miles out of his way, spending the remainder of the night at Bo'ness, but, for fear of being 'attraped,' riding away from his inn at break of day. As he passed Falkirk he saw the country people

'whigging their meres, to be tymously at the kirk, as if they had bein running for a pryse. They passed me, bidding me spurre my hors to communicat with them, to whom I gave no answer, but did ridde softly to the end of the Torre-wode, wher I did find an aile house al alone.'

He took care not to arrive at Stirling, a town unknown to him, until its inhabitants were safely in kirk. But when, at midday, he came within sight of the castle seated on its eminence, the poor man had an unpleasant shock. Stirling was 'a vive representation' of the town of his dream, that

town which Lady Aboyne, his rescuer, had warned him not to go through !

Yet he could not go back, for fear of being pursued either by Covenanters or anti-Covenanters ; so he ' staped on slowly ' with a heavy heart. Then, perceiving two mounted gentlewomen about to enter the town, the great gate of which was shut, he overtook them, and ' saluting them very humbly prayed them to show me how I could go to the bridge ungoing through the town.' The reason he gave for his desire to avoid Stirling itself sounds more ingenious than convincing ; however, the two ladies told him to follow them into the town, ' and you shal not go sex times the lenth of your horse in it, for we shal tak you out by a back gate. Speak not to us befor any body, but follow us wher we go.' The ladies then entered at a gate on the right fastened only with a latch, which they bolted behind them, Father Blackhall thereupon finding himself in a large courtyard with buildings upon three sides and a garden on the other. The house appeared to be unoccupied, or else all its inhabitants had gone to the preaching. The ladies conducted him through the garden to some stone steps which descended by the side of the town wall. As they were only about a foot wide, and had no balustrade upon the other side, his horse not unnaturally disliked them, and the operation which ensued must have been dangerous as well as comic.

' One of the gentlewomene did tak the end of the bridle and going befor him did draw him to her, and I did go behind and pousse him downe until he got his hindermost feet one marche down, and then he did runne down al the rest and the gentlewoman before him, and did hold him until the other and I came to him. They were two very handsome gentlewomen, and very civil, and, as I could judge, sisters.'

Among all Father Blackhall's adventures this is the only one which seems to smack of pure romance, but one must accept it, noting that, as he says, to have been taken in Stirling with the letters from France upon him, would have meant particularly short shrift, since old Lady Mar, mother of the Earl of Mar, the governor, was 'an arche Puritan and Covenanter' and having got wind of the scheme to remove Lady Henrietta, who was her niece, was trying to get her out of Lady Haddington's keeping into her own, and would never have rested until he had been hanged. And his 'good lady's' words to him in his dream, that she would not be able to save him in this town, as she had done (he considered) in the tempest, he interpreted as showing that

'blessed soules and angels do some tymes receave powar from God to deliver their suppliants from the rage and fury of al creatures destitut of raison and free wil, but not or very seldom from the handes of raisonable creatures, man or woman, endued with free wil.'

An interesting doctrine.

Although some even of his own Covenanting kindred were anxious to capture him, and a certain minister's son boasted openly that he had met and killed him, giving details of the encounter, Father Blackhall got safely to Strathbogie and the Marquis of Huntly. But there then ensued a long series of parleys with that arch-waverer which would have been farcical if they had not been so exasperating. The Marquis would only see the priest secretly, in his garden; would only consent to his niece's leaving Scotland if the King gave his permission—and the King was with his army in war-ridden England—and proposed to write on the matter to his son (the second) Lord Aboyne, then with his Majesty, Father Blackhall carrying the letter—a most risky

business for the latter. But indeed the letter would probably never have been written. The priest awaited it in vain for ten or twelve days, Lord Huntly being

‘so much taken up with his new buildings, from four hours in the morning until eight at night, standing by his masons, urging their diligences and directing their work . . . that he had scarce tyme to eate or sleep, much less to wreat. For he was as indifferent of her going or staying, as if nather her persone nor her journey had belonged to him.’

In the meantime, however, another son, Lord Gordon, arrived and remonstrated with his father, pointing out that to send Father Blackhall on such a mission to the King, in time of war, was to send him to the gallows. Then Lord Aboyne himself arrived from England, and both brothers favoured their cousin’s accepting the offer without the King’s consent. But their father thereupon began to feel alarm at the risk to himself of sending his ward out of the country, a difficulty which was solved by Lord Gordon proposing that Father Blackhall, if captured, should affirm that only his promise to the late Lady Aboyne had brought him to Scotland to take Lady Henrietta away, ‘unsought the consentement of others.’ Since, if he were taken prisoner, Lord Huntly’s consent could not save the priest’s life, such a confession would not make his position any the worse. On this condition Lady Henrietta’s guardian agreed that she might leave the country.

Father Blackhall knew, however, that he would never succeed in getting the girl away from Leith or any southern port ; Lady Mar and Lady Haddington would see to that. The next step was, therefore, to prod the Marquis into sending for her to come north. Might she not, for instance, be sent for on the plea that her wardrobe needed renewing—which we may well think a reason rather than an excuse,

if it be true, as Father Blackhall affirms, that 'she had not any other but the murning gown, which she had carried more than a whole yeare.' (He seems to have been singularly well informed about the apparel of his noble ladies.) To this Lord Huntly replied that he would be sending for his own daughter, Lady Mary Gordon, to be married to the young Laird of Drum, and that Lady Henrietta could come north with her. How soon would that be, enquired Father Blackhall. Not until his Lordship and the old laird were agreed on the 'artickles of the marriage.' 'But, said I, if you do not agree thereupon, wil you bring your daughter north? No, said he, what shal I do with her heir, where there be no women? for he was a widower and none of his sonnes were married.'

Frustrated once more, but still undeterred, the priest next put forward as an inducement for bringing the girl to Aberdeenshire the excellent opportunity now offering itself for her departure. A large vessel had come to Aberdeen to convey to France the recruits raised in Scotland for the Scots regiments in French service. What, send his niece over in a ship full of soldiers! Father Blackhall countered by pointing out that the vessel would also carry several banished Catholic families, including the Laird of Balgownie, his wife and nine children. Perhaps the vision of company so domestic turned the scale; at any rate Lord Huntly consented that his ward should be brought from Edinburgh and taken over in this ship.

She had still, however, to be fetched north, and the Marquis averred that he had only one man whom he could send for her, a certain John Gordon. Yet he could not possibly allow her to travel with but one man. Father Blackhall naturally offered to accompany John Gordon. No, that would not do at all, for he might be recognised,

and thus endanger Lord Huntly himself. He might, however, go into Buchan and get old Alexander Davidson—who turns up once again—to accompany John, which, in view of having served the child's grandfather and mother he would certainly be most willing to do. But not at all ! Alexander's thoughts were found by Father Blackhall to be 'al about his marriage with the widow of Artrachie, a woman passed three score and he some more.' So the priest's two journeys to see him were wasted labour, and he was really in despair, for still his own request to accompany John Gordon was refused. And then at last the deadlock was ended by his convincing the timorous Lord Huntly that his going for the child could not endanger his lordship, since he was actually not known 'besouth the Grampian Hilles, much less in Edenbrough.' The hardly-won consent was given, and at last he and John Gordon set out south, travelling 'as comerades upon the way, and as strangers in the innes.' And even so John Gordon was with difficulty restrained from turning back within half a mile of Edinburgh, because he had heard that his master, Lord Aboyne, had been proclaimed a rebel by the Covenanters in that city, and feared for his own skin.

The next obstacle was the young lady herself. It had been arranged that the two emissaries should meet her before the door of another aunt, Lady Barnes, when Lady Haddington, going to her prayers at St. Giles's at eight in the morning, should have set her down there. Upon arrival at the rendezvous Father Blackhall indeed found Lady Barnes and her niece, and the latter's two maids ; but Lady Barnes was in tears because the girl was evidently by now in two minds about going to France after all. She made a pretext that she wished to go back to her Aunt Haddington's house to say farewell to her little cousin, a child of two—'but we

knew her mind was to stay there.' The situation was extremely awkward, for it was naturally impossible to take Lady Henrietta away by force ; she had only to cry out and the two men would instantly have found themselves in the Tolbooth. Father Blackhall, equal to the occasion, asked her whether she would not rather go to Stirling to take farewell of her aunt, Lady Mar, and the proposal was accepted. But they did not go to Stirling—which of course had never really been intended—John Gordon succeeding, as they travelled, in inducing the girl to abandon the idea ; and the party finally arrived in Strathbogie and the Marquis of Huntly welcomed his ward. The last problem with which he confronted the long-suffering Blackhall was that of 'choking off' the various Catholic young ladies who importuned his lordship to allow them to accompany Lady Henrietta to the French Court. 'I did defeat myself easily,' says the priest, 'of those who had not the French tongue, saying that I could not take two dumme wemen together to the Queen' ; the others were more difficult to deal with.

The magistrates of Aberdeen, when at last Lady Henrietta and her attendants arrived there, dared not directly hinder her departure, but they made every attempt to frustrate it by getting hold of Father Blackhall, in which they were unsuccessful. And as she set out for the ship with various Catholic exiles the girl, observing that they were followed by a number of town officers with their halberds, had the wit to send her woman back to Father Blackhall and tell him to embark by some more secret way, for she would not go without him. He did so, and that night, as the ship lay in the road,

'did sing with a loud voice many songs, amongst others, Ulysses and the Siren (*sic*). She said to me, you are very jovial this night ; what maketh you sing so much ? I

answered, ladye, I have never sung, but have oft tymes weeped, since the decease of your noble mother, until this night, and now I sing for joy because I have you heir.'

They sailed at daybreak next morning, July 26th, and two days later were off Scarborough, where they saw four large vessels riding with their sails up. The captain at first feared that they were Dunkirkers and would capture his ship, but later announced that there was no need to be alarmed, for these were Parliament ships, their good friends. 'The devil be thy friend!' thought the priest—though neither he nor anyone else knew at the time that orders had been sent from Aberdeen to these very ships to stop their vessel and remove Lady Henrietta and himself. As it was they went unmolested because all four hurried off in chase of a small vessel which providentially came out of Scarborough at that juncture. It was not in fact until the end of the voyage that the captain discovered, to his great wrath, the identity of the 'Lieutenant Hay' who had come aboard at Aberdeen. 'If I had been told,' said he, 'that there was a priest in my ship, I would never have suspected him, he was so merry and jovial, ever singing or making sport to the company; but the devil is in their cunningness.'

On the 9th of August the party arrived at Dieppe, where the young lady and her maid were lodged in a convent; and after five days' travelling, in a hired 'carosse of relay,' they arrived in Paris. A little later Lady Henrietta Gordon was presented to the now-widowed Queen, who, with her consent, sent her to a nunnery near the Bastille until she should have learned French. Father Blackhall, after remaining in Paris for some days, 'to comfort her until she had contracted some habitude with theis vertuous ladies,' returned to the pupil in Normandy from whom he had been absent nine months. And in those peaceful surroundings it is

pleasant to leave him. Two years were to elapse before, to his sorrow, he had dealings again with the girl whom he had rescued, and more than twenty before he sat down to pen the long and detailed recital of which this is an all too inadequate summary.

VERULAMIUM.

*In drowsy heat the ancient city dreams
Of long-departed glory ; in the shade
The lazy river glides ; the still lake gleams
In gently sloping grass-land, green as jade.
I see the broken line of old grey wall ;
The tree-lined causeway once a martyr trod ;
The great Cathedral watching over all . . .
A pleasant scene, blessed with the peace of God.*

*When twilight comes, I think perhaps there falls
Music within those old Cathedral walls,
And monks chant vespers in the choir-stalls.
Or in the gloom beside the shimmering lake
Perchance the ghosts of ancient warriors wake ;
The years roll back : the mists of ages break.*

M. JAKEMAN.

CRESCENDO.

BY NUGENT BARKER.

MRS. GROTE took me into the front bedroom, and then she closed the door upon us. Many parrots stood or climbed around us—ten of them, I remember, ten African parrots in ten bright cages ; and as soon as Mrs. Grote began to talk the creatures started murmuring, nibbling their grey breast-feathers and raking their red tails, and bowing low over their perches.

‘ This is the room,’ she whispered, as though she were influenced by the purling and muttering of the birds. ‘ Fifteen years ago that sailor came, and ’e ’ad this very room you’re standin’ up in. Yes, sir. ’Is name was Jack Bellow ; and ’e came on a Toosday in winter and stayed three weeks.

‘ ’E left ’is photo standin’ on the mantelpiece, and I ’id it for a day or two from the p’lice officers, and two years later I tore it up and threw the bits away. It was a livin’ likeness, too : as you might say, it was Jack Bellow all over. Long brown face, ’igh cheek-bones, curl of ’air on the top of ’is forehead. Time and again I’ve boarded sailors, and I’ve always remembered the names of their ships, but I’ve clean forgotten the name of ’is. ’E come up from the docks one arternoon in late November, in a cab chocked fore and aft with parrot-cages. “ Christ ! ” I says to Grote, starin’ out of the parlour winder, “ jest you look at this sailor ! ” I’d known ’em bring a parrot or two before,

but never as many as a dozen at one time ! And when 'e went away, 'e left 'em 'ere.

'First and last, 'e 'ad a reel sailor's appetite. Nothin' pleased 'im but the very best of everything—and 'e could well afford it, too. They always can.' She smoothed her dress with her crumpled hands. 'You never saw a chap so spry as what that sailor was. 'E kep' us laughin' most of the time. We give 'im this very room you're standin' in, sir, the best in the 'ouse. And as soon as 'e'd stowed them cages in it, down 'e 'opped, and joined us in a cup o' tea, with rum in it—rum as 'e'd brought along in 'is luggage—and almost at once we bust out laughin'. We couldn't 'elp it. 'E was like that. Laugh and the world laughs with yer. Ask me the names of the places 'e'd never been to, and you'd strike me dumb. 'E'd been to every mortal country under the sun ! Chiney, 'Meriky, Afriky, 'Straley, Caribboo . . .'

A siren hooted faintly from one of the ships in the docks ; and I remembered that the fog that day had been as thick as a loggerhead. I stared at Mrs. Grote, and she continued :

'Jack Bellow took 'is meals with us whenever 'e didn't 'ave 'em down town. 'E sat on the left-'and side of the table, facin' the winder, and 'e kep' us laughin' all the time we was eatin'. Now and again 'e'd bring in sumpthin' special for dinner or supper, and I'd 'ot it up for all of us, and sometimes in the middle of the meal 'e'd 'op upstairs with tit-bits for 'is birds. Them parrots didn't often worry us, like some we've 'ad. They was mostly quiet and clickin' their tongues and chucklin', like what they are at this very moment. But now and again they'd scream that 'orrible, you couldn't 'ear yerself think, let alone speak.' She dropped her voice, and whispered, twitching her nose : 'Yes, and one fine day 'e brought in an extra special tit-bit, only it

wasn't for us, or the birds. It was for 'imself. A smart young woman for 'imself.'

'Hey?' I cried, startled, but not by anything that she had said. I turned and stared at the parrots, and Mrs. Grote continued :

'A young woman. That's right. Brought 'er 'ome with 'im one evenin', near supper-time. That's all right and nat'ral, isn't it? Nothin' odd in that ! Pretty creature she was, too, dark and thin, with a mournful smile and the softest voice you ever 'eard. Pardon? Dark and thin, mournful smile—didn't you 'ear, sir? Mournful ! 'Eart-rendin' ! Took 'er off to 'is room, Jack Bellow did ; so I got down me best and biggest dish, and cooked 'em a supper of steak and carrots—no, sir, *carrots*—and carried it up to 'em, jest as I was, in me bed-slippers. "Thank ye, Mrs. Grote !" 'e says. And then 'e turns to 'er and says : "Mrs. Grote will end by chokin' yer with kindness, Polly !"

She simpered at that, and twitched her nose.

'Pardon? No, sir—Polly. That's what 'e called 'er—Polly. And some days 'e'd call 'er Pretty Polly, or Pore Poll, same as the birds. 'E used to take 'er straight up to 'is room, amongst the parrot-cages . . .'

'Just a little louder, Mrs. Grote !'

'Parrots. Birds. Cages ! Can't you 'ear, sir ?'

'That's much better !' I told her.

She twitched her nose, and continued, mouthing a little :

'I don't suppose we met 'er more than three times altogether, Grote and me ! Not to speak to, I mean. We didn't even know 'er reel name ! We didn't like to ask, I dunno why ! We 'eard 'em laughin'—love and laughter, as they say ! But what with 'er mournful smile and 'is sailor's laugh, we found it difficult to turn our 'earts against Jack Bellow and 'is young lady, and so we thought we'd

ask 'em down sometime to take a bit of supper with us in the parlour, only—one night—'e killed 'er.

'Get that, sir? 'E killed 'er! Murdered 'er . . . done 'er in! *The sailor done 'er in.* Can't you 'ear me? Yes—that's right—'e done 'er in! We 'eard the parrots screamin'! Leastways, that's what we thought at first. But it wasn't only parrots, see? *Not only parrots, see?* Oh, dear, can't you 'ear me? . . . Parrots! Birds! A lot of screamin' *parrots!* . . . No, sir, *birds*—not *words*—you couldn't 'ear no *words*—no *talkin'*—jest *screamin'—screechin'*! And it wasn't only parrots, see? . . . *Not only parrots, see?* . . . Oh, *dear!* . . . ' She paused, and drew a breath, and continued, almost in despair: 'E must of been creepin' after 'er then, 'oldin' out 'is fingers. Fingers! *Fingers!* Creepin' and crouchin'! Screamin' and screechin'! Can you 'ear me? *Blast the swabs!*' she shouted, putting her fingers in her ears: and so she proceeded, her voice rising and falling until at length she had found an even pitch: 'There was our little supper for 'em, cookin' in the kitching! *Pork and apple.* Smell it all over the 'ouse! And when I'd dished it up for 'em I found that *sailor gone*, and there was 'er layin' on 'er *bed of withered roses*, as you might say. Layin' on this *very bed* you're sittin' on—with the *prints of 'is fingers* on 'er throat. *Prints of 'is fingers!* Strangled! Can you 'ear me, sir? Did you get all that? 'ER BED OF WITHERED ROSES? *The p'lice was on 'is track* before you could say Jack Robinson—aye, or Jack Bellow, eether!—but they never found 'im! *The fog was very thick that night, as thick as a loggerhead, as Bellow used to say!* Couldn't 'ardly see the lamp-posts in front of yer eyes, and it was thicker in the mornin'! All that day they 'unted 'igh and low for Jack, but what was the use of it? Like 'untin' for a needle in a bloody 'aystack——' She snatched her fingers

from her ears, caught the sudden crash of sound, and twitched her nose. I remembered well that trick of hers. She hadn't altered. My old landlady hadn't altered. I swear she hadn't altered in fifteen years.

She made a trumpet of her hands, and stood on the tips of her toes.

'THAT SAILOR SAILED TO CARIBBOO AS SURE AS YOU'RE STANDIN' THERE !'

A moment later, Mrs. Grote's face cracked into a hundred wrinkles, and she started silently laughing at the ridiculous figures that we both presented ; I, too, joined her, I let myself go, I fairly bellowed ; neither of us could hear the other ; and amid the uproar of the parrots, that were now screaming and shrieking at full strength, Mrs. Grote and I left the front bedroom, closing the door behind us.

THE BURREN OF CLARE.

BY W. M. LETTS.

CERTAIN names have a lure which even in schoolroom days enlightened the geography book. I suppose three of the most notable examples are Samarkand, with its golden sound, Timbuctoo, with the desert in its vowels and Carcassonne, name for poets. For myself I found that Fez and Marakesh called me, Tintagel and Caerleon of course, and all the names in Brittany. Nearer home one finds names that attract or repel. I was absurdly prejudiced about Newry and found it set beautifully between sea and mountains. But for a time the Burren of Clare had the appeal that the Murrough of Wicklow spelt for me. For more than thirty years I lived in Ireland before I saw the Burren for myself. Now I have had my third visit there and I shall always go back in spring or summer if fortune favours.

In all Ireland, in all my small range of travel I know nothing like this Burren of Clare. One thinks in Galway that there is overmuch stone and to spare in the fields and in those lacy-looking walls, but in the Burren the earth is paved for acres and acres with great slabs of limestone. Some Irish Dante, austere and sin-haunted, might conceive a Purgatorio here ; for one can picture aspiring souls, blown by the sea wind, mounting higher up these terraces of stone from the margin of Galway Bay up to the bare heights of the limestone hills. I say Purgatorio, for one imagines the place in the winds of winter, but it is a Paradise for all botanists.

The word 'Burren' brightens the eyes of those who love wild flowers, and it has been my fortune to go three times with people who could spend hours, days, hunting the chinks and crannies of these hills for the treasures that grow there. For some there is no need to search, they welcome you at once.

I remember in the late May of 1937 our first sight of the glories ahead. We had left Dublin in the morning and come by Athlone, Ballinasloe, Athenry, Oranmore and now we were in Clare. Kinvarra, that blocky castle, standing out to sea, always surrounded by swans, lay on our left and I let our faithful old Austin go slowly so as to miss nothing. There on a hillock at the cross-roads for Corofin and Ballyvaughan we saw the evening sun glint in the eyes of the gentians.

To compare flowers with jewels is natural but mistaken. A jewel is static—permanent; a flower opens and shuts, turns towards the sun, is the lovelier for its impermanence. *Gentiana verna* is as blue as anything can be on this earth. And here were gentians in scores, and dryas with its white flowers and tiny leaves covering every boulder. Daisies are rare on the Burren, but dryas grows more profusely than any daisy grows. It tucks its roots into the sheltered crevices and throws out a long woody stem crowned by great masses of leaves and flowers, which in their decline are lovely, forming silky twists of seed-pod. The people of the Burren are used to botanists and look with a kindly sympathy at the doubled-up figures that stoop over every cranny, scramble up the hills, or crawl on all fours over the terraces.

A gentle old man spoke to me :

'Would you be bathing?' he asked.

I shivered and said No.

‘Then maybe it is the plants you would be looking for and there is one I should like you to name for me, for a lady did give me the name and I have forgotten it. But here it is now, if it would please you to write it down for me.’

The accent of Clare is a pleasing one with the softness and lilt of Kerry but without the Welshiness of Cork. The old man spoke as a foreigner speaks carefully a strange tongue.

I wrote and spelt out *Dryas Octopetala* for him.

‘That is it,’ he exclaimed, ‘a lovely thing and useful too—for it will strengthen the cattle and bring them on if they are weak. And I am thinking that word *Octopetala* would mean eight petals?’

‘You have the Latin?’ I asked.

‘I have not, but my father had it and from him I learnt some words.’ He could have talked all day, for his life was a leisurely one, but we had to press on.

Indeed I have come back to the cross-roads for Corofin and we have yet to reach our headquarters, Ballyvaughan. To the seaward side of the road grows *Cotoneaster*, but we were to find it later.

Travellers who must have a daily bath and cannot pass a few days with a basin wash or a sea dip will not be happy in Ballyvaughan, for bathrooms are not there as yet. But if you want the headquarters of the Alpines and all other good things like a kind welcome, limitless cream, lobsters, and good beds at night you can stay in Ballyvaughan.

We put up with Miss Kennedy at Kerins’ Hotel, the first hotel you meet coming from Kinvarra. Miss Kennedy knows botanists well and laughs kindly when I say that above my hotel I shall have a huge notice, ‘No Botanists admitted.’ For they are an untidy gang, filling up every

bowl and basin with their plants, begging for boxes, strewing floors and tables with reeds and rushes and pondweeds.

‘ Ah ! well, you’re happy with your little bits of plants,’ she says kindly.

This house has sheltered Dr. Lloyd Praeger, botanist-in-chief of Ireland, and in his name she forgives much.

Indeed, this brings me to the point of advice. Among the books essential to plant-hunters in this country is *The Botanist in Ireland*, by R. Lloyd Praeger. If some traveller wants the smaller, cheaper book, *A Tourist’s Flora of the West of Ireland*, by the same writer, would suffice him. Both books give useful information about the country and its other interests. Dr. Praeger’s last book, *The Way that I went*, is one to read too if you like the humours and joys of the road as a veteran botanist has seen it in seventy years.

Our rooms at Kerins’ Hotel formed a little flat with dining-room and sitting-room upstairs. We could have dined had we chosen, but a tea-supper when the soda bread is so good and the cream so thick seemed more attractive. Besides, we wanted to look for the shrubby *Potentilla* (*Fruticosa*) which is one of the rare plants that grow here abundantly. Strangely we missed it on this trip and it is only now in May, 1938, that I am wise about its whereabouts. A field-track to the right, about half a mile out of Ballyvaughan on the Lisdoonvarna road, brings one to a shrubby little valley, ‘ a dingle ’ you would say in England. Climb down by the sunk wall and you will soon be among dense bushes of this shrubby *Potentilla*. So much advice is only needed in early May ; by June they must be so golden with flowers as to call aloud for themselves. The little valley, enclosed by hawthorns and hazels, was whispering with the songs of willow-wrens. The air pulsed with that so lovely, little watery song. But for the most part our birds on these Burren

hills were the wheat-ear, dipping and flicking over the stones ; the stone-chat with his chit-chit-chit of rebuke to strangers ; the lark, hard to find among the clouds or the dazzling blue overhead ; and the queer laughing cry of the curlew, full of fears about her nest in the flaggy ground.

The first day at Ballyvaughan is given to Blackhead and that stretch of coast road that goes by Fanore and on to Poulsallagh and Doolin and round, if you have time, to the Cliffs of Moher. But, often as not, time and weather only allow a thorough exploration of Blackhead and perhaps the sand-dunes below Fanore.

There is a point where the rocks come down to the road by a post, intended for dear knows what sign, and this is a good place to leave a car and begin the search.

Maidenhair fern grows here in the crannies and on the seaside wall is the hardy-looking Sea Spleenwort. If climbing should tax heart or maybe a sciatic nerve too much, plenty can be found near the road and on the seaward stones. But my instinct is to go up the hillside towards 'the green road' which runs parallel with the sea road about 200 feet or more upward on the headland. All the climb is made joyous by the tapestry of dryas and the clumps of gentian, little white or pink cudweed (*Antennaria dioica*) and great sprays of the Bloody Cranesbill ; an unseemly name, for it is a royal purple. Countless are the spikes of orchis of every colour, varieties of *Mascula*, but lovely as it is, it is common, and you will be looking out for the little neat white spikes of *Neotinea intacta*. In late May of 1937 we found quantities with no search, but in this early May of 1938 only one of our party of five eager seekers could find a solitary spike. Great violets (*Riveniana*) grow everywhere and grasses that puzzle the amateur. Maddar and the northern bedstraw are not in flower yet, only a leafy

promise. The stone-bramble trails over the rocks and with it the little spiny burnet rose, whose white flowers surely smell of Heaven itself.

Up on a rock by the green road in 1937 we found *Erinus Alpinus*, which we all associate with old town walls or with our rock gardens. Often it escapes from some old town to the near country, but how did it come so far as to the Burren ?

Above the green road as you go on round Blackhead you see that curious old fort the Cahir of Fergus. There were saxifrages in abundance here, the cut-leaved, the tufted and the rue-leaved. I find the temptation and mistake of botanising is to look on the ground all the time. Every now and then forget flowers, straighten your back, lift up your chin and look all around you. From Blackhead there are views of sea and sky that sing a *Te Deum Laudamus*. An Irish skyscape needs a *Prospero* to praise worthily its cloud-capped towers, the massed cumulus clouds on the horizon, the mackerel skies, the rifts which on a grey day throw a gleam on the sea ; the ever-changing progress of the clouds.

From Blackhead you look across Galway Bay to the Twelve Bens of Connaught and the Maam mountains. Nearer, in the sea below, lie the Aran Isles, Inisheer quite visible on a clear day.

Somewhere near this big Cahir can be found *Pyrola Media* (the Wintergreen), but I followed two long-legged botanists for half a day in July of one year and they never found it. And here one should see the red helleborine, but that was not for May when I have twice made my Burren journeys.

We were sworn to find the Pyramid bugle which is notably elusive. The place given us and marked upon the map was Poulsallagh. I asked some of the road-workers we

passed for the place—they had not heard of it. Each asked another—no, they had never heard of it; they translated ‘Poul—that would be a hole, and sallagh—a bushy place that would be.’ Finally, having strayed to a forlorn and wave-beaten spot, Doolin Bay, where the Atlantic rollers, green as jade, were jumping on the cliffs in clouds of spray, and rushing across the sands in a mosaic of white and green, we turned to a Civic guard who leaned against a door and showed him the printed word Poulsallagh. He too translated it—‘A hole in a bushy place, or a place near the sea—it might be Ballyrehan it would be. You could go up there by Ballylchan house and you’d have the old castle foreinst you, and I’m thinking ’twould be that place maybe.’

True enough, a tall block of castle perched like an eagle on a cliff overlooking land and sea. These castles of Clare, so high, so stern, are giant sentinels in a lonely land. Below, by the sea, we came again to the terraces of limestone. They were gay with the hoary rock-rose, such a glad, golden flower to decorate the pale grey stone. Here and there a soft hairy hawkweed peers from a cranny (*Hieracium Britannicum*). Hawthorns in flower, but dwarfed to a carpet, covered some of the rocks. Five of us devoted ourselves to what seemed a vain task. The rare bugle was not to be seen. But why fret one’s soul when thrift was in flowering masses of every shade of pink? In searching for the rare one may forget what Nature lavishes on every side. However, at last I saw two spikes which had done flowering, tucked away into a cranny; and with these we had to be content.

Had we had an electric torch we might have explored the cavern which runs under Slieve Elva for two miles with passages extending for five miles. But the charm of the open country on a May afternoon was more than the cave

could show. Besides, we had spent a long time at the Cliffs of Moher. For the botanist's eye the close-cropped grass is dotted with *Viola lutea*, bog orchis, and bog violet. But the majesty of five miles of sheer cliff rising to 680 feet above the Atlantic gives one enough for an hour or so. From O'Brien's Tower to the Hag's Head you may look out on these great ramparts of cliff, where gulls and razorbills scream as they rise and fall and veer with the winds.

A wary yellow eye watched us at lunch and a gull, versed in picnics, did sentry until we threw him a piece of bread. A second gull appeared but was pulled so harshly by his tail that he fled screaming to the cliff's edge and told all his relatives of the wrong he had suffered. Was our first friend some sophisticated follower of steamers or had he been a gate-crasher at many picnics?

This Burren district has much of history in its range. There is an old fort and souterrain near Bealaclogga; there are several castles, though none so fine as Kinvarra. And, very lovely in grey stone against the grey mountain, is Corcomroe Abbey, a Cistercian building, once connected with Furness. The jackdaws build in every hole, little grey-hooded brethren who take over all the monastic buildings. Juniper grows on the stones not far off and we found columbines in the abbey grounds. Here lies Conal O'Brien, grandson of King Donal, the founder, his royal stone figure stretched stiffly under an arch, his familiar, cloudy grey skies over his head.

'And what of the roads?' says someone. The roads are entirely possible. Many are being remade. We went to Lisdoonvarna by Corkscrew Hill which winds up to the hill-tops and we found it excellent; and the road to Corofin across the Burren hills is none too bad and certainly worth the taking because of its views of this strange, desolate land

so rich in treasure trove. Corofin, brooding over Lough Inchiquin, is a resort for fishermen and has a most comfortable resting-place in Clifden House. After the grey stone of the Burren the leafiness and watery richness of Corofin have a charm. Four miles south of Corofin is Dysert O'Dea with a ruined church, round tower and a cross that is worth a journey. I have seen many high crosses, but Dysert O'Dea will hold a place apart in my memory.

Dublin.

LOVE LONG SILENT.

*It is too late for everything but speech :
May we not speak at last ?
The future shrinks ; but there remains the past
That this, our present moment, yet may reach.
Tell me your love that I may tell you mine !
Let us share feelings from the years gone by ;
Clearly, before time ends,
Let every memory shine
Out of these eyes that still are you and I—
Into these hearts for ever more than friends.
Let the old love take on divinity
In this pure lingering light of sunset years ;
Since it has grown too late for hopes, for fears,
Why should we not in every word be free ?
Let us now tell our love as angels may :
Not man, not woman—but spirits, even as they.*

LESLEY GREY

BLOOD-SPORTS AND HYPOCRISY.

BY MAJOR C. S. JARVIS.

I HAVE an idea that there is some convenient statute of limitations with regard to crimes and misdemeanours committed in the past, and in the hopes that this is the case I confess that once upon a time I bred fighting cocks and took part in mains. In other words I belonged to that execrated and much discredited fraternity, the 'cockers,' who though they may not be as numerous to-day as they were thirty years ago, are nevertheless still in existence in some considerable numbers. They belong to all walks of life, for there is no such thing as class distinction in the cocking world, and among them are peers of the realm, masters of hounds, well-to-do farmers, millers, shopkeepers, miners and, in those days, there was at least one Chief Constable who kept cocks, and to my certain knowledge several policemen.

The general public seem to imagine that a cock-fight is a public entertainment held in some dell on the moorlands which is attended by the whole local population. I believe this is sometimes the case in Westmorland, Yorkshire and other northern counties, but the really important mains between first-class game birds take place more or less privately in some barn on a remote farm, or in some big manor house in the country where a raid by the police would be a difficult matter. To these fights only the owners of the birds and their closest friends are invited and there is therefore little possibility of the news leaking out.

I am not a bit ashamed of this confession of past back-sliding, for, though I admit willingly that cock-fighting is

cruel, I cannot for the life of me see that it is one-half so brutal as a very considerable number of blood-sports that are not only legal but are lauded to the skies as being typical of the British spirit of fair-play. If a man shoots driven pheasants, hunts the stag, hind or hare, or courses with greyhounds, he might just as well take up cock-fighting also, instead of adopting the usual attitude that cock-fighting is fiendish cruelty while the sport that he fancies is absolutely humane.

As a nation we are the most confirmed hypocrites over the question of cruelty to animals, and this may be due to the fact that most of our ideas and opinions on the subject are ready made for us so that we never attempt to figure the question out for ourselves. We deplore cruelty and are willing to take any reasonable steps to prevent it, provided always that such action will not interfere with our own amusements. We individually have a taste for certain blood-sports, and not only do we set our faces against any interference here, but we flatly refuse to discuss or argue the rights and wrongs—it is so difficult to work up a defence for the indefensible. I am not trying to make out a case for cock-fighting, as this is impossible. It is cruel—it is very cruel—but while condemning it let us study also some of the other blood-sports that are not prohibited.

Hunting is 'jolly good sport,' 'the pastime of our ancestors,' 'the keystone of the British character,' and 'what is more the fox, stag or hare enjoys it as much as anyone.' Active female members of the R.S.P.C.A. take their small daughters to a 'kill' to have them blooded on the cheeks, and on their way home will lay information to the police against Pedlar Lee, whom they have seen working his horse with a sore back. The local R.S.P.C.A. inspector goes to a county market and takes out a summons against a poultry farmer

for putting too many pullets into a crate, but an hour later will purposely fail to see a hunted fox being pushed by the huntsman out of a pollard willow to the yelling hounds beneath. A magistrate after a homily on wanton brutality sentences a man to a fine for driving a lame heifer, and then hurries from the bench to take part in the hunt of the 'carted' deer.

We are, however, all quite convinced about one thing—cock-fighting is a most brutally cruel sport and must be stamped out. The Dumb Friends' League are willing to employ an official for a whole year and expend £800 of their funds in obtaining a conviction in Westmorland over a cock-fight that had been staged especially for their benefit. In France and many other countries this is known as the work of the *agent provocateur*, and a misdemeanour that has been committed at the instigation of an agent is disregarded. If one employs such methods there is no limit to the extent of the synthetic crimes one might cause to be committed.

The sickening part about all blood-sports—the real cruelty—is the acute fear one causes the animal or bird one is hunting or shooting. Look at a beaten fox after a run of an hour; a poor terror-stricken creature, plastered with mud half-way up his flanks, his brush trailing along the ground, and his eyes starting from his head as he slinks along with the music of hounds drawing nearer and nearer. I wonder if it sounds like music to him, and, if he is enjoying the hunt as much as anyone, he has a queer way of showing it. Think of the stag hunted on Exmoor last September who threw himself over the cliffs to escape the hounds. Listen to the terrible scream of the coursed hare at the first grip of the greyhound or its continued human moans if it has been hit too far back by a scatter-gun. Think also of the anguish of those badly-hit pheasants the night after the big drives.

There are two forms of cruelty whether it be towards humans, animals or birds, and they are terror caused and agony inflicted. Of the two there can be no question whatsoever which is the worst. A good many of us living to-day have experienced both, and all will agree that acute terror is infinitely worse than pain. Yet in a cock-fight, brutal as it is, the question of terror never arises, for the birds are not egged on or forced to fight as is popularly supposed. They are burning to get at each other, and for an hour or more from their crates have been yelling defiance and challenges. If by any chance a cock should show a disinclination to fight or display fear when taken from his pen, the last thing his owner would do would be to put him in the ring against his will. The owner might not be studying the bird's feelings, but he is most certainly considering his own, and to risk his stake on a bird that had not his heart in the business would be asking for defeat.

The fact remains that Nature for some reason known only to herself has designed the game-cock for one purpose and one purpose only, fighting. The bird in his natural state thinks of nothing else. He starts fighting with his brothers in the clutch at the early age of six weeks ; another and more blood-thirsty series of eliminating contests takes place at five or six months ; and, when on reaching maturity he is penned with his harem, he never settles down to scratching in the grass for their benefit, but spends his time shouting insults at his neighbours and endeavouring to get through or over the wire to kill or be killed by the cock in the next pen.

It is quite a common occurrence for a cock to get out of his enclosure and walk a quarter of a mile to fight another cock to the death, but there has been no case on record of a fox lurking in the vicinity of kennels in keen anticipation of a hunt or of a hare coming down off the fallows to meet

the greyhounds. People who execrate cock-fighting above all other blood-sports may take it therefore that the question of terror does not arise.

The next point is pain inflicted, and though in all legal sports the hunted animal or bird gives audible or visible signs of agony, the fighting cock at no time shows that he feels or fears wounds.

The last point is that it is brutal and degrading to allow birds to fight for the amusement of a crowd, and of course there is a very sound argument here. All one can say in defence, however, is that almost every night in the United Kingdom men battle together over six, ten and twenty rounds, and death and permanent disablement from glove fights are by no means unknown. Of course these are legal glove fights and there is no brutality, but the following is an extract from a B.B.C. commentary on a fight between Phillips and Foord on the night of the 21st June, 1938 :

‘ He’s hitting him on that cut lip again and again and again. You can see the blood spurt every time that a punch lands. He’s losing a considerable amount of blood—he’s blowing it out in a cloud. He must be swallowing a lot which is doing him no good. Ah, that’s opened up his nose again—he’s bleeding heavily now. Phillips’ eye is opened up. I see red showing. There’s a bad swelling on his eye. Ah, that’s got him on the nose once more—he must be losing pints of blood. He’s down—he’s down. He’s making great efforts to get up but can’t. He seems to be in great pain. He’s making the most extraordinary contortions—I never saw anything like it. He’s got his right leg up and has moved about four feet, but he’s evidently badly hurt and in great pain. No, he can’t do it—the count’s gone. He’s out.’

Well, I ask you !

None of these arguments goes to prove that cock-fighting is not cruel, but when one considers the matter it is very difficult to understand why it is brutal and illegal to watch two cocks doing that which they desire to do, but not brutal or illegal for the same crowd to watch two heavy-weights battering each other to pulp or to follow a pack of hounds worrying a stag, fox or hare. The line that as a nation we draw between illegal wanton cruelty and legitimate clean sport is not a straight, well-defined stroke, but one that suggests the divisions in a complicated jig-saw puzzle so devised to suit a hypocritical people with sporting tastes. There are certain cruel blood-sports to which we are addicted and with these we will have no interference, but to keep up the pretence that we are a kindly people and to throw dust in eyes generally we make a tremendous outcry about other blood-sports which are not so popular.

In various parts of rural England one will see rows of coops in some sheltered field, and here with hen foster-mothers a large number of pheasant chicks are being raised. As they grow older and use their wings their feeding is so arranged that they fly over selected woods at a great height, and on a certain day in November when the leaf is off the trees the guns go out with loaders and beaters to shoot these hand-reared birds. As I have shot a good many myself I do not suffer from the popular illusion that these synthetic birds are easier to hit than the wild ones, for the contrary is the case, but that is hardly the point. The birds are raised artificially, not for the market as they are not an economic factor, but solely for the sport obtained shooting them as they fly, and the fact that they fly very fast and very high and are difficult to hit in consequence means that a very considerable number are hit too far back and die in agony a few days later from perforated and gangrened intestines.

These are facts that no pheasant-shoot owner or keeper can deny, but it is good healthy natural sport and very different in every way from allowing two game-cocks to fight.

Very much the same thing occurs on big duck-shoots. The female wild duck is a careless mother and loses half her brood through rats, pike and other enemies, and so her eggs are collected and hatched out under hens. The resulting young birds are fed farther and farther away from the coops until there is a regular massed flight up and down the river at feeding times. On some duck shoots the birds on the day appointed are enticed into a pen, caught and placed in crates, shifted a mile or so in a cart or lorry, and are then released to fly over the guns, who are in position between them and their feeding haunt. This also is a recognised and perfectly legal sport carried out in a natural way, and it is not a bit of use for the Dumb Friends' League to try and secure a conviction here, for a magistrate would be shocked to the core at any interference with the legal pastimes of the British people.

I suppose our attitude over our own blood-sports and those of others is rather similar to that of the proverbial socialist who had been holding forth in the village inn about equality and the sharing out of wealth and possessions.'

'And do you mean to say,' asked a friend, 'that if you had two horses you would give me one?'

'Certainly I would.'

'And if you had two cows you would give me one?'

'Of course I would.'

'And if you had two pigs you'd give me one?'

'Wodyermean?'—darkly. 'I've got two pigs.'

Our views about cruelty are so hard and fast and so entirely right until we ourselves are affected, when we make

the most childish excuses, such as 'it's good for trade,' 'it gives employment,' 'it keeps country houses open that otherwise would be closed,' and the old silly, asinine one about the hunted creature 'enjoying it more than anyone.' Quite a number of people apparently have been granted interviews with certain erudite foxes, authorised to speak on behalf of the community, and have been assured that the fox far prefers to be hunted and torn to pieces by hounds to quick despatch by a gun.

As it is the habit to offer the most convincing excuses for all other blood-sports, perhaps one might be permitted to do the same for the much-execrated 'cocker.' It is said that two blacks do not make a white, and this is an irrefutable fact, but a legal black alongside an illegal one has the effect of lightening the sombre tone of the latter to a certain extent. I am not taking up cudgels on behalf of the cock-fighting fraternity—all I aim at is to make a few comparisons and to study the matter from a non-hypocritical point of view.

I admit that it is very difficult to make out a case for the cocker, almost as difficult as it is to justify hand-reared ducks and pheasants, and a hind kept in confinement for the purpose of being hunted every Saturday. However, here it is. The real cocker is a man who is interested in the game-bird, one of the most beautiful and spirited creatures that Nature has evolved. There is some reason to think that the game-cock was introduced into England by the Romans, and the fact remains that because of cock-fighting it has existed as a distinct breed throughout the ages. Birds may come and birds may go, but the game strain goes on for ever. The Cochin China, the Plymouth Rock, the Majorca, and others of our grandparents' days have had their day and have died out as fashion changes, but the old English game-bird bred

from pedigree stock is still with us, and is as pure bred to-day as he was two hundred years ago.

To those who are not interested in poultry a game-cock may seem to be very much the same as any other bird, but to others who have an eye for a cock he stands out among the Rhode Islands, Light Sussex and other breeds as a race-horse does among the ordinary farm stock. In the first place he is beautifully built and beautifully balanced, his bright eye, his tight plumage, his small well-shaped feet, and, above all, his proud stance speak of breeding. Purity of stock is more essential with the game-bird than any other domestic creature, for the slightest trace of the common barn-door or utility blood will persist for generations and cannot be eradicated wholly, and the cock of doubtful breeding will show the white feather.

It is the cocker's hobby to produce these birds and to spend his time and his money carrying on the stock, and if possible improving it. As with race-horses there is only one real test to prove if he has been successful or not. With the race-horse breeder it is the race-course, and with the cocker the cock-pit. Unless a bird gives definite proof that he is game to the last feather it is impossible for the cocker to decide if he has been successful or not. The great majority of the cock-fighting fraternity that I have met were far more interested in the breeding, crossing of recognised strains, and training than they were in the actual main that was the deciding factor.

This is the case for the cocker, and on the whole I think it is a fairly weak defence. At the same time I doubt if I should have been able to do very much better if I had taken up cudgels on behalf of the breeder of greyhounds to be used for coursing hares, or the walker of hounds to be employed in stag hunting. In both cases one is building up

stamina in one creature with the object of fitting it to destroy the life of another expeditiously.

For those who are interested this is the life of a game-cock. At the age of eight or nine months he goes out to 'walk' with some accommodating farmer or small-holder who will run him with the hens. If he turns out well he will be picked up at the age of eighteen months or so to be trained for a main. During this period he will be kept in a small pen, fed on special food, and 'flirted' daily to improve his wind. This consists in tossing him in the air against a feather mattress for a quarter of an hour a day, which is excellent exercise for both man and bird.

On arrival at the place appointed he will find himself with thirty or forty other cocks in travelling crates. Here lots will be drawn and Captain Blank of Blank will find himself drawn against A. N. Other of the adjoining county—five birds each, give and take two ounces, with a pound bet on each fight and a fiver on the match.

The birds are then weighed and 'cut out,' that is to say their wing and hackle feathers are snipped off short and the tail is clipped. Then the steel heels are affixed; these are short, sharp spikes of steel with a metal socket, that fits over the stump of the natural spur, and a strip of soft leather that is wrapped round the leg and bound with bass. The heel must be fixed by an expert as, if set too wide, the cock will strike only glancing blows, and if too close he will drive the spur through his own head.

It is this steel spur that has given cock-fighting its reputation for gross cruelty and one must admit that it does sound horrible. Actually, however, instead of making the fight more brutal it has the opposite effect. The game-cock if properly bred will never admit defeat, however battered he may be, and he will continue fighting until both birds are

so knocked about that both will probably die. This is what happens invariably when two game-cocks meet inadvertently on a farm, and I have heard of occasions when two birds have fought for three days when their owner has overlooked the fact that they have got together. The steel heel, therefore, is used solely to end a fight quickly, and the winner will then return to his harem to propagate his species whilst the loser will die the death he has chosen. If he were left on the farm to do as he pleased he would spend the whole of his time fighting and killing other birds until his hour came, when he would be quite content to die as he had lived.

I do not wish to give the impression that I consider the prohibition of cock-fighting should be rescinded or that the cruelty that exists is justified in any way. It is quite impossible to make out a case for it, but if anyone takes the trouble to study the matter it is not only silly, but hypocritical as well, to prohibit and execrate cock-fighting as the height of cruelty and to allow many other blood-sports that are infinitely more cruel.

The plea that one enjoys sports that inflict cruelty on animals and birds is a very weak excuse indeed. If it is quite legal to hunt a stag across a moor until it jumps over a cliff to escape hounds, and if it is perfectly legitimate and good healthy sport to let loose a couple of greyhounds at a hare that has no earthly chance of escape, I cannot see that it is any worse to let two cocks fight until one is killed. The cocks *do* want to fight and enjoy every minute of the battle—one cannot say the same for the fox, stag or hare or the dozen other animals and birds we slaughter for our amusement and entertainment.

MEN ARE LIKE THAT.

BY M. DE B. DALY.

I.

As lift-boy, and later as chasseur, in one of the great cosmopolitan hotels of his native city, Francesco Toselli made the most of every chance. He learned to speak four languages glibly, though badly, and could patter a few phrases in several others. His big brown eyes endeared him to women, his cleverness in making a little knowledge appear a great deal deceived most men, and he was so nimble that he was always first at the call of wealthy clients. He had an aptitude for time-tables and a memory for faces and, had he not poached on the preserves of the head-concierge, might himself have aspired early to the frock-coat and crossed keys. As it was, whenever he applied for a vacancy he found that the resplendent holder of the office at the Hôtel Imperial had put a spoke in his wheel. Finally Ferrari secured his dismissal, and for a time he found the world painfully oblivious of his merits. Eventually, however, he was engaged as town-guide by an international travel agency, which though it paid badly, offered many possibilities. Like most Italians, he preferred low pay and lucrative opportunity to a higher salary and incorruptibility. He was justified by results. He found profit even in the polyglot coach-loads of economical tourists, to whom he declaimed the points of interest as they drove round the town. There was scarcely a German so careful, a Frenchman so parsimonious, or a Dutchman so hard-hearted as to ignore Francesco's discreetly ready palm : the English and Ameri-

cans, notoriously susceptible to melting eyes and exquisite manners, were defenceless before him.

When his mother died he decided to marry, and chose, from many willing damsels, a flaxen-haired chamber-maid from the Imperial. Greta did not, of course, give up work when she married, but was obliged, in order to go home at night, to exchange the house for the laundry.

Francesco soon decided that matrimony was a very pleasant institution and not at all expensive. Greta's earnings, although (as became those of a woman) much less than his own, were enough for their simple housekeeping, and Francesco paid the rent. He was even able to obtain, on easy hire terms, the motor-cycle for which he had long hankered.

After his first grief Francesco could not help feeling that the loss of an infant had its compensations. Had the child lived, it would have cost a good deal, and for some time Greta could have earned nothing. However, when he told some clients of his bereavement, his emotion was quite genuine, and they showed their sympathy in the only way open to them.

Greta, being Swiss by birth and in Italy from childhood, spoke three languages, and Francesco unexpectedly found this an asset in a wife. Whenever he heard a strange word or phrase, Greta could explain it. He had no intention of letting her think she knew more than he, and his casual questions were always well padded. He was a shrewd observer, and made Greta laugh over the extraordinary ways of foreigners.

'Give the Germans and Dutch beer,' he told her, 'the English tea and the Americans wine, and you will be all right.'

He explained the importance of recommending photographers who could develop, print, and deliver in the shortest time—speed being more important than skill in a photographer. On the other hand, only the best hairdressers must be recommended, for a bad water-wave gave endless trouble. He described the type of tourist who thought nothing good unless it were expensive and the other who bought what he did not want because it was cheap. He explained that, with the exception of the disappearing English milord and American millionaire, all foreigners now know that Italy is a land of bargaining. Therefore, said Francesco, when they ask the cost of this or that, tell them double, so that they think themselves clever in getting the best of a bargain. Everybody is then pleased—the shopman, for he has had a good price, the tourist, for he thinks he has paid very little, and the guide, because when his clients are in a good temper they are generous.

Francesco, flattered by his wife's admiration, also told her the jokes which raised a laugh, the statistics which caused astonishment, and the value of foreign currencies. Greta, who liked old buildings, at first asked questions about their history, but she soon found he only knew (not always correctly) what was in his guide-book, and hated to be interrupted.

Two years of married life passed, in Francesco's opinion very satisfactorily, and though grieving for her baby and a little disillusioned about her husband, Greta was content. Then came disaster.

Francesco, after an hilarious *pranzo* with some companions, drove his motor-cycle into a wall. The machine became a mangled heap, and its rider found himself in hospital with several broken bones. The doctors promised him a complete cure, but the outlook was gloomy. Greta, trying on

her daily visits to cheer him, was almost brought to tears by his lamentations.

'I shall be lame for life. The agency will not take me back. Gastaldi is only waiting to steal my place. The insurance company will not pay, merely because I had forgotten to light up, and that was the fault of the Trattoria dei Cacciatori—their wine is too strong. The garage owner is a Jew, he will prosecute me.'

'No, no !' cried Greta, seizing on the first chance to stem this tide of woe. 'He has been very kind, and says he will wait.'

'Ah, only because he thinks he will still get custom through me ! When he hears I have lost my work he will change his mind. We are ruined. We must give up our apartment and find a cheap room. We must sell some furniture. We must go to bed as soon as it is dark to save light. We must have coffee only once a day.'

Greta did not mind doing without coffee and light, but the idea of giving up their flat and selling furniture was very bitter.

'I must earn more money,' she declared.

'How is that possible ? You have good and regular work. It is paid as well as other work for women, and you have some meals—you would not get that except at a hotel. No, my poor Greta, you had better begin at once to look for a room in the San Secondo district.'

This was a poor and sordid neighbourhood, far from either the hotel or agency, and Greta was horrified.

'Do you not think,' she suggested, 'that they might let me do your work for a time ? Just till you come back.'

Francesco was really amused.

'You take my work !' he exclaimed, '*Cara mia*, you do not know what you suggest ! A guide does not merely

push about a bit of iron. *My work needs knowledge, tact, ability—in fact, many qualities which you, my dear, pretty little Greta, do not possess.*

‘I might learn,’ said Greta humbly.

‘They do not want learners, *cara*. Besides, by the time you had learned I should be well again.’

Greta was logical. ‘But you said that perhaps they would not take you back after so long. If I could just replace you until you are well, it would make it safe.’

‘No, no, the idea is absurd ! Do not talk such nonsense ! But of course you were joking !’ Francesco began to recover from the shock of her suggestion. ‘Yes, a good joke ! You, a little bit of a thing, with blue eyes and fair hair—*carina, carina*, of course—to take the place of Francesco Toselli ! But you said it to amuse me, and certainly it has made me laugh !’

Greta did not answer. She could not see that the colour of her hair or eyes mattered, but knew that Francesco would not alter his opinion. He resented the idea of being replaced by a woman, and the mere suggestion that his wife could do his work was humiliating. Yet to live in one room instead of three ! To sell her sofa or her buffet ! It would be heartrending. It simply could not be done.

II.

When Greta entered the office of the agency she felt very guilty. She knew it was wrong to do what her husband disapproved, and worse to hide it from him. She almost hoped the manager would not see her, or would refuse to employ her.

She stood quietly by the long counter, waiting to catch the attention of a clerk. Near her a very autocratic German

lady was demanding satisfaction for a mistake. She had paid for first-class accommodation and had received third—or fourth—or fifth. Her room had no bath, the hotel no lift, and the food was an insult. In vain a bewildered Italian clerk stammered and waved his hands. When she paused for breath, Greta said gently in German :

‘May I translate for the *gnädige Frau* ?’

Delighted to hear her own tongue, the complaining lady gasped out,

‘Oh, if the *Fräulein* would be so kind ! This *Esel*, this *Dummkopf* . . .’

After a few words in Italian to the clerk, Greta was able to assure her that all would be put right. The gracious lady, who was both rich and well-born, allowed herself to be pacified, but would not leave the office till the manager had been fetched.

‘Had it not been for this *Fräulein*,’ she concluded to him, ‘I should have written to your head office, and never again employed your agency.’

The manager overwhelmed her with apologies and, after bowing her to the door, turned to thank the young lady who had so providentially intervened. Greta, summoning all her courage, asked for an interview, and when she left his private office had promised to return two days later.

‘We are short-handed for the moment,’ the manager admitted, ‘one of our conductors has had an accident, and our German clerk is out with some tourists. I am glad to employ you temporarily, and if the man you are replacing should not return, it is possible you could have permanent work. Do you know any English ?’

Greta had an extensive knowledge of the names of under-linen, and could ask at what hour madam wanted her bath or breakfast, so replied that she spoke a little. The manager,

unlike Francesco, thought blue eyes and flaxen hair rather an asset in a guide, and said she would soon learn enough.

‘*Guten Tag, Fräulein Müller,*’ he concluded, and she found herself dismissed.

The gracious lady and the manager had both called her *Fräulein*, and the last few years had seemed to vanish. It was only when she was in the street that she realised that, in answer to his question, she had automatically replied ‘Margaret Müller.’ She was turning back to explain the mistake, when it flashed upon her that it would be better to explain nothing. When Francesco was well enough for work she would disappear from the agency and return to the hotel. Francesco would never suspect who had replaced him. As she thought of this simple solution of her difficulties her spirits rose, and, in spite of a guilty conscience, she was so cheerful as she sat by her husband’s bedside that he said reproachfully,

‘*Cara mia*, I think you do not realise how dreadful, how tedious it is for me lying in this bed. Here am I, bandaged, stitched, plastered, helpless ! I am unable to move without pain, or to sleep at night, and yet *you* laugh and are merry !’

III.

Greta’s tips were not large ; she was apt to forget that special attention should be shown to the wealthiest and not to the most infirm ; she had not learned the art of being always ready to receive, and her hands, when they should have been empty, were usually filled with wraps and parcels belonging to old ladies.

She was, however, successful with the tradesmen. Those birds of prey, noting with glee that the hard-bitten Toselli had been replaced by a small, fair, almost timid-looking

girl, had expected to make her dispose of inferior goods and to reward her only with some trifle. They were distressed to find that *la bionda tedesca* insisted not only on the best value for her tourists, but the last penny of commission for herself. After a week, Greta was relieved to find that, with the strictest economy, she could keep her flat and her furniture. A few days later Francesco was well enough to be moved to the home which (he was convinced) only his own merits had saved.

‘No doubt Grioni knows that he could not easily find another tenant such as I,’ he said complacently, when Greta told him they would not be condemned to the San Secondo district. She was Lutheran by education and honest by nature, and did not like telling lies. However, she had to find some explanation for her extra money, and invented (besides a rise of pay for herself) a soft heart for the landlord. After this she became hardened in prevarication and found reasons for her change of hours and for wearing her best clothes every day.

One day, on her return, she found Francesco hobbling round the room with only one stick.

‘See!’ he cried, ‘I can do it! You had better go to the agency to-morrow and tell them I will return next week.’

Greta had a sudden realisation of what this meant. Palaces and picture galleries would no more be open to her, and instead of driving in cars through beautiful scenery, she must return to the steamy reek of the laundry and the silly chatter of her companions. She temporised.

‘You had better go yourself in a day or two. If you send me they will think you are still too ill. And it is no use going until you can manage the Campanile steps.’

He knew she was right. The manager would not take

him back until he could climb the two hundred and fifty steep and winding steps of the Campanile, and he still shirked the eighty shallow stairs of Casa Grioni.

Unable to go out, he found the days very long and was delighted when his friend Vivaldi came to see him. After a display of his injuries and a detailed description of his treatment, Francesco told his friend how everybody was anxious to help him in his undeserved misfortune.

‘The management of the Hôtel Imperial has increased my wife’s pay while I am out of work, and the landlord has consented to take a lower rent. Of course, that is but just.’

Vivaldi gaped at him. ‘But that is astounding!’ he exclaimed incredulously. ‘A management, perhaps, because that is someone else’s money, but a landlord! Quite impossible!’

‘Not at all. I am a very good tenant. I have been most unfortunate. My wife went to him and explained this.’

‘Ha, ha-a!’ Vivaldi laughed slyly. ‘So your charming little wife went to see the landlord! Well, that might make a difference, certainly. Don’t let her go too often, my friend.’

Francesco was very angry. ‘My wife is not one with whom anyone could take a liberty.’

‘Of course not. I would not suggest such a thing! I only made a general remark. Your wife is so very pretty.’

Francesco, pacified by this tribute to his good taste, remarked modestly that she was not at all bad.

‘Oh, very pretty indeed,’ affirmed Vivaldi, ‘I saw her in a car the other day with some very grand people, an elderly man and an elegant young lady, and I assure you she was far prettier than the young lady.’

‘I don’t know what you mean!’ exclaimed Francesco.

'She was not in a car. She was not with grand people. You are mistaken.'

'Oh no, I am not. It was on Thursday afternoon. Do I not know your wife well? Do I not even know her clothes? She was wearing that grey costume she wore when we all went to the *festa*.'

'Oh yes, of course, on Thursday she had a holiday and went out with some cousins from Zurich, very grand people. He is a rich jeweller, a widower, and his daughter . . . ' Francesco had not, in any case, his wife's prejudice against lies, and when they were sufficiently elaborate they ceased for him to be lies. He told his friend a great deal about the Zurich jeweller, but when the subject was exhausted he became so morose that Vivaldi, who did not believe a word of it, soon left.

On his way downstairs Vivaldi met an acquaintance, exchanged a few words with him, and both laughed. Francesco heard them, and scowled with fury. He was sure they were laughing at his stupidity in believing his wife.

Higher pay! Lower rent! Best clothes! Irregular hours! To think that he, Francesco Toselli, had swallowed all that nonsense! He remembered now how Greta had discouraged him from returning to work. So long as he was a prisoner she could do as she pleased. No doubt she was meeting the scoundrel Grioni every day, for of course the elderly man with whom Vivaldi had seen her was Grioni. The owner of a house like this might well be a fine gentleman who drove all day in cars. At first, no doubt, he would take his daughter, but not for long . . . ' Francesco had soon invented for his own torment as circumstantial a history of the libertine Signor Grioni as he had given Vivaldi of the Zurich jeweller, with the difference that while Vivaldi did not believe in the jeweller, Francesco convinced himself

that Grioni was every whit as bad as he pictured him. If Greta had been there he would have accused her fiercely, but he had plenty of time to think what to do. Every Italian prefers indirect to direct methods, and Francesco was (as he himself would have said) *italianissimo*. It would be absurd to make an accusation which she would at once deny. The only way to treat such deception was with guile.

When Greta came in, she was greeted with a groan, and Francesco, with a martyrlike air, told her he was much worse and would not be able to go downstairs for several days.

Greta was very distressed. She examined his injuries, but could find nothing amiss. She decided that the stupid Vivaldi had depressed him by chattering about amusements in which he could not take part.

Since, unfortunately, it was not possible to entertain him by telling him about her tourists, she fell back on a scrap of news she had gleaned from a friend.

'Ferrari is ill,' she said. Any misfortune to the head-concierge of the Hôtel Imperial delighted Francesco, and in his satisfaction he forgot his grievance.

'May it be small-pox !' he exclaimed fervently.

'He is consumptive,' Greta assured him, 'and will not return. The second concierge is doing his work.'

'That fool ! Ha, ha ! Ha, ha ! What a mess they will be in !'

'Bessone is only temporary, as he has no languages. Why do you not apply ? There is a new manager.'

Francesco stared at her. He had long given up all hope of this ideal post, but with Ferrari out of the way and a manager who had not been poisoned against him he had at least a chance.

'Just what I was thinking,' he agreed, 'and I have always meant to apply if Heaven should remove Ferrari.'

He began to think that Heaven was at last to make amends for its recent scurvy treatment of Francesco Toselli. A concierge made safer money than a guide. He was less dependent on weather and was usually partly fed, clothed, and boarded.

As an inquisitive, self-seeking lad Toselli had noted every little act of peculation and dishonesty of the lordly Ferrari. He knew that he had invariably made a charge for delivery of telegrams and registered letters, though none was due; he had seen him hide the cab-tariff, so that he and the drivers might share the benefit of higher fares; he had learned that very pleasant little sums could be made by juggling with the exchange, and that commissions were an easy and constant source of income.

Francesco stroked his glossy black hair as he thought how a frockcoat would become his tall straight figure, and already felt proud of the simple 'IMPERIAL' in gold braid on his peaked cap. He would be the youngest head-concierge in the city, perhaps in Italy. There would be a paragraph in the paper to say so. Down a vista of not too many years, he saw a small hotel of his own. He began to consider the immediate problem of a new motor-cycle when his wife interrupted his thoughts.

'What a pity you are worse to-day. It would not matter being a little lame, and you should apply soon.'

'I shall be better to-morrow,' said Francesco impatiently.

And indeed, Greta noticed that, so far from being worse, Francesco already appeared better; he forgot to use his second stick, and scarcely limped as he walked. The suggestion she had made so casually seemed suddenly of vital importance. If Francesco were a head-concierge, he would

think the agency work more suitable for his wife than ironing, and in his delight at his own success would forgive her for having deceived him.

She was wondering how her plan could be brought about, when suddenly she remembered having heard that the new manager's wife was a Swiss from her own town. If so, then surely, surely . . .

Meanwhile, Francesco too was thinking how to arrange the future. 'It fits in well. To-morrow, even if I must take a taxi, I will go to the hotel. After I have seen the manager I will make enquiries at the laundry. If I find she goes regularly to work, good—if not, ha ! Signor Grioni will find he cannot trifle with the head-concierge of the Imperial !'

IV.

'You are very early to-day,' remarked Francesco suspiciously next morning, as Greta vigorously swept and dusted.

'Yes, before I go to work I want to visit a lady who lives near Tante Lisa,' replied Greta, glad to be able to speak the truth. Francesco, however, thought her answer an obvious invention, but as he did not want her to guess his suspicions he said nothing.

When she had left he considered his plans carefully. None knew better than he that an applicant should choose the right moment to approach a manager. Never when he is busy, nor when a meal is near, nor directly after one. The late afternoon would be best. After the interview, if he found his wife at the laundry, he would accuse Vivaldi of being a liar. If he did not, he would at once go in search of Grioni. He felt himself a very lion of valour as he con-

templated his readiness to tackle the stalwart Vivaldi or the unknown Grioni. For all he knew, Grioni, though not young, might be even more stalwart than Vivaldi.

His careful planning was wasted. The manager was in the best of tempers, but told him that the vacant post was already filled. Although Francesco himself was an adept in the polite lie, he usually believed those of other people, and never suspected that the manager had merely chosen the pleasantest way of ridding himself of yet another applicant.

His motor-cycle was receding and his hotel had vanished as he made his way round to the laundry. He was brusquely told that Greta Toselli had not been there for some weeks. No one could tell him the reason. Rebuffed and enraged, Francesco turned to go. The hotel bus was setting out for the station, and the driver, seeing him hobbling down the road, gave him a lift to the office where the Grioni rents were paid.

In reply to a request for Signor Grioni's address, the clerk said :

'If it is about your apartment, you may save yourself the postage, as all business is done through this office.'

'It is a private affair. I must have his address.'

'Very well.' The clerk scribbled it on a piece of paper.

'New York ! He is not in Italy !' gasped Francesco.

'Oh no. He has not been over for several years. He is getting too old to run backwards and forwards, you see. Eighty-seven last December.'

Though almost stupefied by this news, Francesco managed to stammer out that he wanted to know when his rent was last paid, and how much it was.

The clerk was a little surprised, because Toselli did not look the sort of man who would not know the amount of

his rent, but he handed him a memorandum. The usual sum had been paid on the usual day.

‘I think it was your signora who paid it. A very young and pretty signora.’

‘Did she ask for a reduction?’

The clerk laughed. ‘No, indeed! She was much too intelligent. Young, pretty, and intelligent! You are truly fortunate, Signor Toselli.’

Signor Toselli did not feel in the least fortunate. Any doubts he had had were dispelled. Greta, his fair-haired, blue-eyed little wife, was deceiving him. She had given up her work, was driving in a car, wearing her best clothes, and yet had enough money to pay the rent as well as their housekeeping. Since Grioni did not exist, or existed, at eighty-seven and in New York, only slightly, there must be someone else. Francesco realised that his lame leg would not let him track and surprise the culprits. Reluctantly he decided to tax his wife with her perfidy and demand the name of her lover.

Rage and self-pity filled him as he limped homewards.

Down one of the side streets several motor-coaches were discharging passengers. They were the cars employed by his agency, and professional interest caused him to turn down the street. He stood in a doorway while fifty or sixty gutturally voluble Germans streamed past. A man in uniform led the procession, and at the end, leading a child by the hand as she talked to some stragglers, was Greta.

When the party reached the main street the conductor turned and called out, ‘Fräulein Müller, will you be kind enough to escort these ladies and gentlemen to the Hôtel Millefiori? I have arrangements for to-morrow to make.’

Greta’s cheerful voice replied, ‘Why, certainly, Herr

Fruchte ! I will show them the way, and go home from there.'

Even in his fury, Francesco realised with added annoyance that Greta, as usual, was doing more than her share. It was the conductor's business to look after his party, and the local guide should have been free at the end of the day's trip.

V.

As Greta waited in a tiny sitting-room, she felt almost stifled with nervousness. It would be easy for her fellow-countrywoman not only to refuse her request, but to make trouble.

When at last the door opened, Greta turned from the window expecting to see a stout, middle-aged and self-important matron rather like Tante Lisa. Instead there stood in the doorway, looking quite as nervous as herself, a young girl with fair hair parted over a wide brow and rosy Swiss cheeks. The girl said in halting Italian,

'You wished to see me? I am the Signora Venturi.'

Greta, trying not to look surprised, replied in German :
'Please excuse me troubling you. I greatly need your help. And I too am from Zweibrunden.'

The girl's eyes shone.

'Oh, have you come from there? Is the snow gone from the pasture-land? Are there many climbers? Have the big hotels opened for the summer season?'

She was so young, and her questions so eager and childish, that Greta felt quite old as she answered her. The bride (for the Signora Venturi, it seemed, had only been married a few weeks) was disappointed to find that her visitor had not been in Switzerland for some years, but she chattered freely about people and things in the little Oberland town. At last she said :

‘But I am selfish ! Tell me what I can do for you. If I can, of course I will help you.’

Greta told her of her husband’s dreadful accident, which for the present would not let him return to his work as a guide, though he could easily undertake that of a concierge. She explained his gifts and qualifications, and begged that they might be employed at the Hôtel Imperial. The other listened seriously, and then said :

‘I must tell you that Enrico—my husband—does not want me to do anything in the hotel, and does not tell me much about it. But I know he has not yet replaced poor Ferrari, and I will tell him about your husband.’

‘I cannot thank you enough,’ said Greta.

‘Please do not thank me. This evening I will tell him what you have told me, and I think I can promise you that he will at least interview Signor Toselli. You see, Enrico is so fond of me that he does all he can to please me. If I tell him I like you very much, and that I want him to give your husband Ferrari’s post, he will if he can. But of course I cannot promise.’

Greta, afraid of being late at the agency, seemed almost to fly as she sped through the streets. Even when, after many tiring hours, she left the German tourists at the Hôtel Millefiori and was climbing the stairs of Casa Grioni, she was light-hearted. The little bride would succeed, Francesco would be head-concierge, and she would remain a guide. She was so eager to confess her duplicity that she could hardly wait till she reached home.

‘Francesco ! Francesco !’ she called as she entered.

He seemed to have been out, for he was hanging his hat on a hook. He turned scowling towards her, and Greta’s light heart dropped with heaviness.

‘So !’ he roared at her, ‘this is the way you treat me !’

Me, with a broken leg ! It is easy to deceive a husband who is injured !'

'Oh, Francesco, I am so sorry . . . I did it for the best !'

'For the best ! You stole my work !'

'No, indeed, I only took it until . . .'

'You drove in cars with men !'

'I don't know what you mean !'

'You pretended you were not married !'

'Not on purpose, Francesco . . .'

'You told me lies about the rent !'

'Yes, I did, I did ! I was wrong !'

'Oh, easy to say so when you are found out ! You pretend you are working in one place when you are at another !'

'I know ! I didn't want to trouble you,

'I should have forbidden it !'

'I know ! But I have paid the rent !'

'What does the rent matter ? The only thing that matters to a wife is not to deceive her husband !'

'I was going to tell you to-day—now !'

'That is easy to say !'

'Indeed I was, Francesco, because I have some good news !'

'The best news you could have would be that you had not deceived your husband !'

Greta pulled herself together.

'There is no harm in what I have done, Francesco. And now I have—at least I think I have—obtained for you the post of head-concierge at the Hôtel Imperial !'

Francesco's rage, which (since he no longer suspected his wife's fidelity) was due only to wounded vanity, subsided, and he asked in quieter though still surly tones, what she meant.

She told him of her visit, and Francesco, forgetting his wife's deceitfulness and his own bad leg, seized Greta round the waist and danced about the room, kissing the top of her head as they capered. At last they fell, gasping and laughing, on the sofa.

'Oh, Francesco, don't forget you must be serious now. The head-concierge of the best hotel in Italy should not behave like a mad boy!'

'That is true,' he agreed, 'but I was so happy to think that I am to be head-concierge—ha, Bessone shall call me "sir"!—and you are not flirting with Grioni that I had to dance. A-i-i! Now my leg hurts!'

'Flirting with Grioni!' exclaimed Greta, and Francesco had to explain how that fool Vivaldi had told him a fairy tale for which he must some day answer. It sounded quite amusing and as they laughed together over it, the estrangement which had grown up between husband and wife vanished like smoke. Greta told him of her experiences and listened attentively while he pointed out her mistakes in managing her tourists and told her how much better he would have done it. They planned for the future, occasionally saying without conviction that perhaps, after all, Signora Venturi's efforts might fail, then went to bed as happy as children.

Their optimism was justified. The manager of the Hôtel Imperial sent for Francesco Toselli and after covering his former polite lie with another by saying that the chosen man was ill, offered to give him a trial. Astute though he was, Francesco agreed to take less than the last man, for the manager was also astute (or he would not have been manager) and had decided in this way to please his wife and justify himself with his employers.

VI.

After several weeks' absence from town, Vivaldi returned to find his friend Toselli effulgent in gold lace and broad-cloth at the Hôtel Imperial. Awed by the discreet splendour of the lounge where Francesco from his pulpit-like desk reigned over his underlings, he only waited to arrange a meeting and was invited for the next Sunday afternoon to a small apartment over the hotel garage. Since there was room for the furniture as well as themselves, Greta had no reason to regret Casa Grioni and its eighty stairs.

On Sunday afternoon, his black and gold replaced by elongated plus-fours of very light-hued tweed, the new head-concierge displayed his shining Bianchi and its side-car to his admiring friend.

'My last machine,' he said, implying that the Bianchi was only the latest of a long series, 'was really beginning to get out of date. I should in any case have had to get something better when I took charge at the Imperial. Of course I never ride it in uniform, but it would not do for me to be seen by our clients—the Prince of Peragia is staying here, you know—on a ramshackle old bus hardly fit for Bessone.'

'You are a cute one!' Vivaldi exclaimed with deep respect. 'You kept it dark from us all that you had put your wife into your job at the agency to keep it warm for you, and then when poor Ferrari goes, plop! you jump in here and your wife stays there! *Furbo! Furbissimo!*'

Francesco liked nothing better than to be thought smart. 'Am I one to be cast down merely because I smash a leg and a bicycle?' he asked, caressing his well-shaven cheek.

'No, of course not. But you are certainly lucky to have so clever a wife.'

‘Clever ! Oh no ! A guide’s work, my friend, is—pah !’ He snapped his fingers in the air. ‘She is not clever, but neither is she a fool—or she would not be my wife. And remember, I coached her well to take my place.’

Greta and her friend Anna Venturi were at the window above the garage yard where this conversation took place. Anna looked rather indignantly at her friend, but Greta was smiling affectionately down on her husband. Patting Anna’s arm she said :

‘Men are like that.’

Bordighera.

THE GATE OF DEATH.

*I remember a little of the gate of death ;
There was not any light, nor leaf, nor sound,
Only a great silence among stones.
And I shuddered and tried to call to the world,
But my tongue was as dumb as the rock ;
And I could not remember the faces of parents or friends,
I could only wait and tremble.
Only of loneliness was I aware.
And suddenly came a voice from the vast and hollow night :
‘ I will call you in some other hour. You will come.’
And then I felt my hands and my brow and my limbs,
And I ran to a place of sunlight and heather
And I pressed my body to the warm brown soil,
And wept and bit the grass for joy.*

IDRIS DAVIES

'STUART.'

BY J. W. WILLIAMSON.

It was an adventurous moment when we decided to widen the family circle by buying a canary, especially as neither my wife nor I knew anything about canaries, except that they were usually yellow and sang when they chose to sing.

We stood before the mass of little wooden cages at the Stores and were asked to choose one. I felt about as competent to make the selection as I should have been to choose a hat for my wife, and she was no better placed than she would have been if she had been called upon to select a pipe for me. After some bewilderment and a pathetically desperate attempt to put on a knowing air, I boldly fixed on one, simply because he seemed, in my immature judgment, less shy and nervous than any of the others and, as our main idea was to get a friendly pet, it seemed wise to avoid the obviously nervous birds.

We lived in chambers, sixty steps up, among the tree-tops, in one of the Inns of Court, and we took our purchase home, proudly, in a new cage and left him in charge of her who, in the refined archaic nomenclature of the Inn, is to be described as our 'laundress' and was as excited over this interesting domestic event as we were.

'Don't worry,' had said the salesman, 'if he doesn't sing for a day or two. He will feel strange at first.'

But we had only just descended the sixty steps to the ground-level, on our ways to our respective daily tasks, when we heard an excited voice overhead. It was our

laundress leaning out of the window and calling out in ecstatic triumph, 'He's singing !'

It had apparently taken him less than five minutes to decide that he was at home. That song, though neither of us had heard it, was ringing subconsciously in both our hearts throughout that day and who shall say that it did not lighten them ? After all, in place of silent chambers when we were out, there was a flat filled with song as with air.

He went on singing all right, but we wanted more than that. We wanted a playfellow and a friend. So we set to work, talking to him a good deal, until at last he realised that these vocal sounds were meant for him. But there was to be no physical approach. Bring only your finger up to the cage and he flew in panic to the bars at the farthest end. So we tried bribery, food bribery—a tender lettuce leaf held to the bars of the cage for a start. At first he would not come near it nor touch it so long as it was held in the hand. To him that human hand held all sorts of threats.

We decided he should not have the lettuce until, as an earnest of trust, he had taken at least one peck at it while it was held in the hand. It took a little time, but at last the tempting green leaf was too much for him. He came nearer, fearfully, and at last pecked. The rest of the leaf was then left to him. So the game was played, until he would come confidently and take a tiny bit of leaf held on the tip of the finger ; and it was not very long before he lost all fear of the finger and would peck it, without anything on it, in sheer play. And there came that great day when I put my finger through the bars and he promptly jumped on it, as if it were a twig offering friendly support. A father's pride at baby's first toddle was not, I swear, greater than mine when 'Stuart' first hopped confidently on my finger and stayed there. Yes, it is an odd name for a canary, but

it had family associations and, as he was now one of the family, it was proper he should bear it.

We opened wide the cage door, after having previously taken care that all windows and doors of the room were closed, and let him come out. At first he flew excitedly to a high perch—the top of a picture usually. Thence he would make little flights. Getting him back into his cage was at first a ticklish business. It was done by getting near to him when he was stationary and putting the cage with its open door so close that his only way of movement was back into the cage. So the game went on. His flights became more frequent and more confident. His favourite stunt was to fly from the top of a picture to the far corner of the room and then, turning a half somersault, to swoop back on to the picture again.

We took to standing in the middle of the room with outstretched finger, calling to him as he perched on some picture. He would chatter back, bend eagerly for flight as if he must come to us and then, his courage failing him, off he would go on his loop stunt again. Still we persisted with the stretched-out finger and the continuous call. Again and again he was on the verge of coming, but some vestige of mistrust held him back, and he would burst into song as though he desired to change the subject or as if singing were a much better game than flying. And yet that finger was tempting. He had perched on it often and found it comfortable. At last he took the plunge, flew straight to the hand, perched on it and then was off on an eccentric curve to the picture again. We praised him, told him how good and brave he was and, though the words may have been meaningless to him, yet I must think there was something in the tone he did not altogether miss. He summoned up courage to come again, and soon it was a regular game to fly from the

picture to the finger, then in a great swoop to the corner of the room back to the picture again. And all the time we talked to him and he would chatter back.

He loved his daily outings from the cage. Apart from this game of picture to finger and back again, there were all sorts of things to be explored, for he had his curiosity. It was an exploration, for example, to fly on to the mantelpiece and thread his way through the obstacles of photo-frames, silver cups and candlesticks. The candlesticks had a fascination for him that I never fathomed. He would get close and peck, peck, peck at the smooth surface for ten minutes or so, but whether he was merely sharpening his beak or making friends with the image of the similarly pecking canary that he saw in the convex mirror of the silver stem, I could never be sure.

Getting him back into his cage from these excursions became, after a time, extraordinarily easy—unless he took it into his head that he hadn't had a long enough outing! His cage hung in the window opposite the wall on which was his favourite picture perch. When he showed signs of having had nearly enough of flying, we went to him, called out 'Cage' and pointed to it with a minatory finger. Off he would fly to the top of the cage and thence on to the ledge formed by the upper and lower window frames. We turned the open door of the cage to him and in he would hop. He devised himself—*lui, tout seul*—this particular route home, from top of cage to window-ledge and then through the open door of the cage. And no one will persuade me that he did not clearly understand that 'Cage' meant he was to go home. But, on occasion, he could be as wilful as a child unwilling to be taken to bed. In those moments, if you called 'Cage' while he was out, off he would fly to some other picture, and it was only by chasing

him with outstretched finger and peremptory voice from one landing-place to another that, at last, you could get him to give in and go back to his cage.

I had him out once when a friend called.

'But how do you get him back to his cage?' said my friend.

'Oh, just tell him to go.'

'Nonsense!' said the visitor.

'Well, you watch,' said I.

I went to Stuart who was then rather 'puffed' after many flights, resting on his favourite picture.

'Cage,' said I, in the tone of a Roman father and with outstretched hand.

He gave a little chirp, flew to the top of the cage, then on to the window ledge and, when I had turned the cage so that the open door faced him, in he hopped.

'Well!' gasped my friend, 'it's perfectly marvellous!'

Was it for me to explain that, if Stuart had not been inclined to go back to his cage, I might have had to chase him from picture to picture all round the room before I got him in? It was much better to leave on the visitor's mind an impression of a perfectly trained canary obedient, as children and dogs are not always obedient, to the human word.

That he did in some way understand at least the implication of one other word I have no doubt. He developed at one time an unpleasant habit of turning his head round and chipping some feathers on his back, which resulted in giving him a very untidy appearance. We would be reading, perhaps, and he was feeling bored, and then we would hear this chip, chip, chipping. A stern and emphatic 'No' made him stop and remain perfectly motionless, watching us. If we turned our heads to resume our reading, back would go

his head to resume his chipping. Another and a sterner 'No' reduced him to guilty immobility again. He would stay a full minute with head half-down, as still as a stone, so long as you were eyeing him. Often it was 'No' after 'No' over a period annoyingly long if one wanted to read, but don't tell me that he didn't get something of the baby's idea of what 'No' meant.

He had his antipathies—hats, broom-handles and certain colours, particularly red and black. If either of us went to his cage with a hat on there was always a protest—a plaintive, drawn-out squeak. It was not a chirp nor was it the guttural squawk he uttered when he was scolding, either in real anger or in play. We knew that squeak; it was always either of fear or of complaint. In nine cases out of ten if one heard it one knew that something had frightened or displeased him. And, since he cannot read this, let me admit here that he was the utmost coward I ever knew. A fly on a bar of his cage would reduce him to semi-paralysis. A black grape or a red cherry placed on the seed-box would send him to the other end of the cage, where he would gaze at it fearfully as if it had been a Mills bomb—and this although he had eaten many grapes and cherries. He loved apple-peel, but not if the skin were red. And it was extraordinary, the skill he had in taking the flesh from a bit of apple-peel and leaving the outer skin as thin, and almost as transparent, as the finest tissue-paper.

We used to put him to bed not long after sundown, for somebody had told us that canaries' lives are often shortened by want of sleep. A green silk cover over his cage excluded the light sufficiently for his slumbers. Even in this matter of going to bed he frequently showed the traits of a child wishing to stay up late. On such occasions the plaintive, protesting squeak was made at the sight of the green cover,

and one had to harden one's heart not to give in to the protest and let him have 'just five minutes more.'

It was great fun in the mornings to fetch him from the sitting-room to the breakfast-table, for we always had his company to breakfast. Often as not, when I removed the green cover from the cage, I would see him wide awake on a perch near to the window side of the cage, his tail towards me. He would look round over his back, eyeing me as if I were a stranger. I talked. He eyed me, motionless. I would ask him whether he didn't know me. Still he would play the mute, immobile stranger. Then I would put my finger through the bars at my end of the cage and in a flash he would pounce and perch on it, pecking it in a very ecstasy, and I had to carry the cage into the dining-room with him on one finger thrust inside it—quite a respectable juggler's job. I deposit the cage on the breakfast-table and open the door. Out he springs on to my outstretched finger, with more delighted peckings which I must think are bird's kisses, and we go to look out of the window on to the passing stream of trams, buses, vehicles and pedestrians, which seem to excite a mild, very mild, interest in him.

Strange to say, he never showed the slightest interest in the sparrows that flew near his window, though he might be alarmed by a pigeon alighting on the sill. He had had so much of us that he had come to be almost pathetically dependent on human society. Although apt to be a little shy at first with strangers, at least, with some strangers, he would soon peck friendly almost anyone's finger pushed through the bars of his cage and, out of his cage, he could easily be persuaded to perch on a stranger's finger, even though the feathers on his head might rise slightly, as though he were not quite sure whether the situation were entirely without risk.

But his most engaging trick was his way of begging. Did he wish for a little butter at the breakfast-table, or to be taken out of his cage for a romp, he would hop rapidly backwards and forwards from perch to perch, in order to attract your attention, and then, stopping, would bend his head right down and twist his neck so as to look at you upside down. That pretty, fantastic contortion was his irresistible *petitio*. We could never deny him what we thought he wanted when he begged that way.

He had perforce to be left alone a good deal in the flat, especially in the afternoons. And it was remarkable how, after a time, he tumbled to the significance of a scratching latchkey and an opening front door. Nearly always, before either of us could get to the sitting-room where he was, he would call out in a welcoming chirrup. We would answer back from the hall to evoke more chirruping before entering his room. And then he would come to the perch nearest us, fluttering his wings and chattering to be taken out. Often his delight that his state of lonely boredom was ended would find vent in a burst of song poured into one's face as he perched on one's finger, his little body all a-quiver with his vocal vibrations, his head moving from side to side and his throat swollen with ecstasy. One such burst of song I timed to last without a break in the phrasing for three-quarters of a minute.

So he lived with us to our delight for many years. But in his seventh summer, for no reason that we could find, he ceased his flights. He would be brought willingly out of his cage but no longer did he seek to fly on to picture or mantelpiece, still less to loop his favourite loop. And he always went willingly back to his cage. It dawned on us that he was now middle-aged, at least ; though it seemed absurd to think of so slight and light a bunch of life being ever other

than young. So I took to putting his cage, with the door open, on a small table beside the arm of my easy chair. I would start to read the evening paper and very soon out he would hop from his cage on to the arm of the chair, then along the arm to my elbow, whence he would flutter to my shoulder, hop along to my breast and, standing on my tie, be fascinated by pecking at my moustache. My bald head had a perennial fascination for him. Many a time did he flutter on to it, only to discover that, for a bird, it was an unusually slippery skating rink. With my wife he had other diversions, such as trying to pick the stones out of her rings or, perched on her shoulder, plucking the short hairs on the back of her neck, until she squealed—whereupon he would huddle up into a frozen statue of ornithological innocence. And then he would yawn as if to say: 'The hysteria of these women bores me.'

Sunday morning breakfasts or 'brunches' were big occasions, for there was no Father Time standing behind one's chair and tapping one on the shoulder as a reminder that moments were flying and tasks were waiting. There was time for real play, and a favourite game was to get Stuart on the table between us, my wife holding a bit of apple-peel between finger and thumb. He would pounce on her finger to eat the peel. I would make to catch his tail, when he would immediately round on me and scold, with angry (or was it feignedly angry?) peckings at my finger. My wife would then touch his tail, whereupon he would round on her, and so we had it, to and fro, an exciting game of 'tig' on the breakfast-table.

But, as time went on, he grew less and less playful. He would come out of his cage willingly enough to perch on one's finger, just for close company apparently, for he would often tuck his head under his wing and go to sleep. I have

held him so asleep with his feathered breast against my cheek for many minutes at a time.

When we were away on holidays a kindly ironmonger and his wife, themselves fond of birds, took him in. After one such holiday I went to fetch him, but his cage was empty and his stiffened little body was given to me gently confined in a little box. He had suddenly dropped dead from his perch during a very violent thunderstorm.

I took him home. That evening the gardener of the Inn was burning the autumn leaves. He, too, was a lover of birds and he agreed that Stuart should be reverently cremated with the leaves. From our window overlooking the garden my wife and I watched the smoke ascend to the autumn sky and turned to realise how very empty the chambers seemed. Strange that so much happiness could come from a little feathered thing a few inches long and fewer ounces in weight !

IN A CATHEDRAL.

Into the ages, soul of Man,
 Walk as a shadow that is oddly cast
 By a departed sun.
 Here every one,
 Who comes with quiet tread and questing air,
 Is muted with the mind's lone tracery
 Of lives in little, names, and pious prayer.
 Here all the pulsings that are past
 Alone have Life's reality :
 Cold, cold they are, and silent—yet they fan
 The generations' might resistlessly,
 Like wind on water, over those that seek
 A moment's respite from the earth-bound din.
 Here many a score of tombs and tablets speak
 The island glory's length,
 The Saxon dimness and the Norman strength,
 Cross-legged Crusader, mail-clad Angevin,
 Each now a nothingness but name,
 Enruffled Tudor, lord of half a shire,
 Stately laid Stuart and his dame,
 Wigged Georgian earl, once elegant of fame,
 Victorian priest,
 And, latest of the line, Edwardian squire.
 Here in the kingdom of the prone
 Is found alone
 The peace of Man's equality.
 Here, freed from striving after place
 And now unknown,

*The greatest level with the least,
The saint beside the beast,
In Death's embrace
Are laid the stalwart linkings of the race.
Here from the hammerings of steely strife
That is this life,
All silently—
A host of days by pardoning Night
Enveiled from sight—
Their pride and prowess listed stand,
Vain challenge to indifferent scrutiny.
All emptiness—all needs, all dreams,
All passions, so it seems,
Are gathered here,
Like hollow shells of the sea
That strew the strand
Of an amorphous land
That was and is not and shall never be.
And such—Time whispers in our ear,
An envious thief—
Is vagrant's universal fate,
Come soon, come late.
Patience, winged soul—and peace !
The ages pass and, passing, leave belief
In purpose wider than the little span
Allowed to Man.
These are the halls of prayer :
The organ sounds,
It swells and dies away
Into the waiting air,
But who shall say
That all its echoes cease ?
Who sets the bounds*

*Beneath the margin of the unseen shore ?
 The rings rise upward, widening evermore.
 Even so the coloured light subdued
 Fails, yet is everlastingly renewed.
 Not meaningless—old potsherds trampled, torn,
 Unconstrued by the world to-day
 As though unborn—
 Is this array,
 These monuments in line of Earth's decay.
 That Man forgets is nothing : who is he
 That, thinking on Eternity,
 Ascribes to God the impulse of a mind
 That fades away
 And can unheeding be
 Of any life that ever He designed ?*

GORELL.

CALL TO ARMS.

*' To arms ! ' the Athenian watchmen cried, ' To arms ! '
 ' To arms, O Greece ! The Persian ships are near ! '
 And Greece avoke, found unity, and armed,
 And battled fiercely for her liberties ;
 And Marathon's field minished the Pagan hosts,
 And Salamis and Plataea vanquished them.*

*To arms ! To arms ! Our foe's the Pagan still.
 We must once more be Spartan, sober, strong ;
 Courageous spirits, dedicated, free ;
 Trained and equipped invincibly for war ;
 Yet loyal friends of Peace, and in all our lands
 Burning to fight the ogres of oppression,
 Cruelty, disease, starvation, poverty ;
 And, in these aims united, we shall live !*

C. L. STOCKS.

CAFARD.

BY A. D. C. SCOTT.

I.

TCHÉKOV sat glowering sullenly at the blank stone wall before him and listened to the receding footsteps of the sergeant of the guard as he crossed the prison yard. For five full minutes after the cell-door had clanged behind the sergeant he did not move. He sat motionless, his massive shoulders hunched, his close-cropped bullet head slightly forward, his powerful hands clasped together on his knees, and an expression on his face that was not pleasant to behold. Mingled hatred and ferocity showed plainly on his brutish unshaven features, and maniacal rage in his eyes.

Suddenly he rose to his feet, and shaking his fist in the direction the sergeant had gone spat a curse unutterable in its foulness.

It was not against the sergeant, however, that the curse was directed, but against Adjutant Liebhaus. And the prisoner's feelings about him were almost unanimously shared by the men of the 10th Company.

'Huit jours et demande. . . .' Again the man cursed savagely. 'Sacré nom de Dieu. I will make the swine pay for every day.' But the threat was an idle one and he knew it.

Legionnaire Deuxième Classe Ivan Tchekov had not served ten years in the Foreign Legion without learning that it was both useless and dangerous to utter threats against a non-commissioned officer, but at that moment, so bitter

were his feelings, he would willingly have risked the direct penalties to settle his score against the adjutant.

Tchekov was not a bad soldier when he was sober, and was recognised by his superiors as a useful legionnaire ; but when he was drunk, which was often, he always made trouble and consequently was frequently sentenced to the cells. He was too old a soldier to worry much over that, however, and merely shrugged his shoulders philosophically when punished, and when sober once more was quite prepared to admit that he deserved his punishment. Which goes to prove that Tchekov was a normally good soldier, and points to the fact that only exceptional circumstances could cause him to be so enraged against his present punishment. For seldom in his life had he been as sober as he was at the moment.

The 10th Company, to which Tchekov belonged, was stationed at Djebel-Zar in the Grande Atlas, and now for four months the sixty odd men who comprised the company had been confined in the small fort which guarded the pass Djebel-Zar. Convoys brought provisions once a month, and that was the only glimpse they had of the outside world.

It was but natural that such confinement irked the spirits of all, and when men see always the same faces and surroundings, with nothing to relieve the monotony, tempers and patience are short. Added to this unpleasantness was the fact that at any time the fort was to be attacked by the Chleuks, and if the attacking force was greatly superior in numbers, as had happened more than once in the case of advanced outposts, the fort might well be captured and every man killed. This possibility would not normally deter a legionnaire, for he knows full well that death may be his lot at any time, and conditions might have been tolerable but for one thing.

Adjutant Liebhaus had been a thorn in the flesh of the men ever since he had come to the Company nine months before, and by now was heartily hated by every man below him in rank. A product of German military training, discipline was his god, and he drove and drilled the men each day until they were ready to drop from exhaustion. Each movement had to be executed like a machine, and if a man was a fraction of a second out of time the Adjutant saw it and was swift to punish.

Men would fall to the ground exhausted, but to Leibhaus it was merely slackness or malingering, and the hapless man was sure to languish in prison for some time after that. Punishments were given freely for the most trivial of faults, for the German seemed to delight in meting out extra *corvées*, guard duty and extra drill, until the men had very little time of their own ; and he was not above inventing imaginary faults if he thought that the men were not sufficiently occupied. It was impossible to complain, for that would give the Adjutant a welcome opportunity to frame a charge of inciting discontent.

It was doubtful whether Liebhaus was liked by his superiors, but if his methods were not approved of they were at least recognised as effective, so he was given a free hand.

While the Company was in garrison at Fes, Liebhaus's regime was bearable, since the men could always console themselves with the diversions to be found in town when off duty ; but even that was denied them when the Company was sent to Djebel-Zar, for here there were no women, no cafés where one could drink with one's companions. There was only the canteen, and Liebhaus saw to it that they had very little time to spend there.

Tchekov was the Adjutant's particular butt. In the first month after the German came to the Company the legion-

naire had aroused his dislike for some slight or imaginary cause, and since then Liebhaus had never let pass a chance to make things unpleasant for him. And now at Djebel-Zar things had gone from bad to worse.

The Company was commanded by Lieutenant Pierry, who was incompetent and careless as to how things were run in the Company so long as his own peace was not disturbed. He was quite content to leave matters in the hands of one who was capable, namely Liebhaus.

The Adjutant demanded nothing better and acted accordingly. He was virtually in command of the Company, for the Lieutenant was very gullible and agreed with everything he said. So that anyone who came before him for a misdemeanour was sure of punishment, without any chance of an explanation.

The eight days' cells that Tchekov had just received was yet another example of Liebhaus's harshness. The unfortunate Russian had been detailed for fatigue duty, a previous punishment awarded by the Adjutant, and at the same time had to take his turn at guard. Obviously he could not perform the two duties simultaneously, and any other than the Lieutenant would have condoned the offence under such circumstances, but not so Pierry. Carefully prompted by the brutal Liebhaus, he informed Tchekov that he was guilty of negligence of his duties and as such would be sentenced to eight days' cells with a demand for an augmentation.

Small wonder that the Russian's feelings were bitter towards Liebhaus, and he vowed to make him pay for all the injustices he had committed. It was no easy matter, however, to catch the Adjutant. Many men in the Company would have knifed him without the slightest compunction and considered it a good deed done, but such an expedient would be dangerous in the extreme.

It had happened more than once in the Legion that a non-commissioned officer who was disliked by his men had been found one morning with a knife sticking in his back, with no one any the wiser as to who the assassin was. And Liebhaus probably knew that his life would not be worth much on a dark night if he met a legionnaire alone. Tchekov was certain that no such opportunity was likely to occur, for the German always went about armed, not because he was afraid, but as an ordinary precaution, and he would not hesitate to shoot if necessary.

II.

Tchekov finished his punishment in the cells and once more took his place with the Company. To all outward appearance the affair was finished and forgotten ; and in fact it was—by all except himself. He still thought over his scheme for revenge, and how to achieve it. Sooner or later the chance would come, and then—and then—Liebhaus would never again punish another man.

The men were cleaning their rifles in the room where they slept, and as Tchekov thought of that moment which would come when he had Leibhaus at his mercy his hands gripped the stock of his rifle tightly, and for a second his eyes burned with a fiendish light. He knew what he was going to do. He knew just where he would shoot the other. There was a spot on the back of his neck between two folds of flesh, for Liebhaus was a fleshy man. Tchekov had decided on that spot when he first made up his mind to kill the German, and now in his imagination he could almost see the place—a small dark hole where the bullet had entered, with a thin trickle of blood oozing out over the neck.

‘Garde à vous !’

The sudden cry aroused him from his thoughts and he

sprang to attention, as the man uppermost in his thoughts entered the room.

Liebhaus looked round the group of men, a cruel sneer on his thick lips.

‘Repos, get on with your work,’ he said curtly, and the men turned once more to cleaning their rifles, some sitting on their beds, others standing. The Adjutant walked over to the bed on which Tchekov sat, industriously polishing his rifle-bolt, and stood looking down at the other ; then he bent down to pick up the dismounted rifle, and squinted down the barrel. The Russian said nothing, nor even looked up from his work, until Leibhaus threw the rifle on to the bed, and said harshly :

‘The barrel is filthy, Tchekov. Is that how you do your work, pig ?’

Tchekov stood up. ‘I have not cleaned it yet, mon Adjutant,’ he said quietly.

‘H’m, a good thing for you then : otherwise you would have another taste of the *boîte*. It had better be cleaner than that for the inspection, or else you will get more prison.’

‘Oui, mon Adjutant.’

The legionnaire’s voice was respectful, and his stolid face showed no sign of the rage which seethed within him. He knew well that his rifle was spotless, for not five minutes before he had finished it, but because it was his rifle Leibhaus was sure to find an imaginary spot of dirt somewhere.

The Adjutant waited a moment, then turned on his heel and went out of the room.

‘He doesn’t like you, eh, Tchekov ? Now you will have to clean your *mousqueton* again. It is bad luck,’ said the man who slept next to him. Everyone knew how Leibhaus goaded Tchekov, and sympathised with him.

'I will see him in hell first, scum of a pig !' cursed the other, flinging his cleaning rags down angrily. 'I will show him.'

'Don't be a fool, Ivan, you can't do anything,' warned the man who had first spoken, a Pole. He wore a green stripe on each cuff, denoting a legionnaire of the first class. 'The best thing you can do is to be careful not to cross his path.'

'I will cut his heart out, the German swine !' Tchekov exploded. But his rage soon died down and he continued his task.

He was to be deprived of his revenge, however, for that very night the little fort was aroused from its slumbers by a cry of 'Aux armes !' The sentinel on one of the bastions had given the alarm on seeing something which seemed more solid than a shadow moving stealthily up the steep rocky slope of the hillside on which the fort was built. He fired in the direction of the shadowy form, to send it scuttling away out of sight.

A few minutes after the first shot had been fired the Company was assembled, each man at his post along the walls, straining his eyes to see into the pitch darkness and catch a glimpse of something moving. But nothing stirred in that blackness, and no sound came to break the stillness. It seemed that there was not a soul for miles around, though each and every man knew that not far away the enemy were waiting, ready to spring, and that only the sentinel's vigilance had averted a surprise attack which might have proved fatal to the little band of men.

They had not long to wait. The Chleuks knew that there was now no chance of attacking unawares, so they came in a wild horde ten minutes later, relying on superior numbers to succeed where surprise had failed. They out-

numbered the legionnaires by at least five to one, but the latter had the advantage of position, for the Chleuks had to scale the walls to come to close quarters, and for a time the battle went in favour of the French. Men fought grimly and silently, firing steadily into the wild, yelling mass in front of the walls ; there was no need for careful aim, for each bullet was sure to find its mark. The night rang with the sharp reports of rifles, interspersed with the staccato rattle of ' fusils mitrailleuses ' and the savage, furious cries of the tribesmen.

Tchekov lay beside his loop-hole firing coolly and methodically whenever he saw a Chleuk advancing. Loading, firing, reloading until his rifle burned his fingers, he worked like a machine, and every shot found its mark. He liked to imagine to himself that it was Liebhaus out there before his sights, that it was Liebhaus who threw up his arms and fell when he pressed the trigger. The air was thick with smoke and the acrid smell of powder, mingled with the odour of blood and sweating bodies, but still he worked on like a man in a dream, not caring whether the fort fell or not, so long as he could carry out his scheme for revenge.

Soon the rattle of rifle-fire died down, until only an occasional shot sounded as a man saw a Chleuk and fired swiftly. The attackers had found the fire too fierce and fallen back, carrying with them nearly half their number dead or wounded. The fort had been defended stoutly and the Chleuks had paid dearly for their surprise attack. It was very unlikely that there would be another attack that night, as the enemy had suffered sufficient loss to render them more cautious for a while, but no chances could be taken ; the sentinels were doubled, and no one slept much for the rest of that night.

III.

One of the men killed in the night attack was Adjutant Liebhaus. He had been shot through the head and killed instantaneously, and not a man in the Company mourned his death, except perhaps Lieutenant Pierry—on whom the onus of command now fell again,—and Tchekov.

The Russian had a peculiar feeling of being cheated of his revenge. He had become so obsessed by the anticipation of killing his enemy that he had come to believe that no one could do so but he himself. The German's untimely death from an Arab bullet had not entered into his calculations, and now that he was deprived of his thoughts of revenge his disappointment was actually greater than his relief at being rid of his persecutor.

The next day followed its usual course, and a general air of relief was felt among the men as they went about their various duties. No longer now would they be cursed and harried at every turn, for that gross, harsh bully now lay in an improvised mortuary awaiting burial, together with the eight others who had been killed.

That night Tchekov sat by himself in the small canteen, drinking heavily. He took no notice of the men around him as they laughed and talked over their drinks, and when occasionally someone shouted a greeting to him in his corner he seemed not to hear. The little beetle, or 'cafard,' was turning in his head, and he was no longer aware of his companions or surroundings.

Many legionnaires have the 'cafard,' which walks and bores into the brain. It is called madness, and is caused by many things—by loneliness, monotony, drink, and sometimes by one's own thoughts. It drives one insane, to do violent deeds which one knows nothing of.

Now Tchekov could feel the little beetle moving in his

head—boring, biting, till he forgot everything but his one obsession,—Liebhaus. He had thought so long of that little round hole in the German's neck, and now the hole was between the eyes. It was all wrong. The hole was at the back. Why, then, was there that little black, red-rimmed hole between the eyes? The fat German pig had always cheated him, and he was cheating him now; he was dead.

His head was aching and seemed to be on fire, for now the little beetle was biting deeper and deeper. He felt thirsty, and raised the bottle to his lips; it was empty. He put it down with a savage curse, and rising unsteadily to his feet, lurched to the counter to buy another. Holding the full bottle under his arm he made his way outside, heedless of the men around him. He found his way to his room and sat down on his bed; then he carefully opened the bottle.

He was just about to take a drink, when a sudden idea seized him. He put the bottle down again, stood up, and reeled over to the rifle-rack at the other end of the room. He picked out his rifle, and went back to his bed; then searched among his equipment and produced a cartridge, which he carefully inserted in the breach. He had decided that that particular cartridge should kill his enemy, and had guarded it lovingly for a long time.

His mind was quite made up. He knew exactly what he was going to do. He was going to kill Leibhaus. They said he was dead, but it was not true. They were trying to cheat him, but he was too clever. He would fool them all. If Leibhaus was dead he would kill him again, and then what would they say? He, Ivan Tchekov, was cleverer than all of them. That German pig was afraid of him. He was pretending to be dead, so that he should not be killed by the man whom he had always cursed, bullied, and persecuted.

Tchekov took a large gulp from the bottle and gave a coarse laugh. Well, Leibhaus was not going to escape him. He would go out and find him now.

Just at that moment one of his room-mates, a man named Pereira, entered the room. Confronted by the spectacle of Tchekov with a rifle in one hand and a bottle in the other, he naturally presumed he was drunk and called out, laughingly :

‘Ha, Tchekov, tu va à la chasse?’

The words acted like a douche on the other’s brain, unbalanced and stupefied as it already was, and he wheeled round, startled. He had not heard Pereira enter, nor did he recognise him ; all he saw was Liebhaus—Liebhaus, with the familiar sneer on his lips and the cruel mockery in his eyes. And the rifle came up to his shoulder, the barrel pointing at the man’s head.

So they said Leibhaus was dead, did they? Well, they lied, because here was Liebhaus standing before him, not five yards away. That did not matter now, though. He would not escape this time. Tchekov’s finger tightened on the trigger, and the other man, not knowing whether the rifle was loaded or not, but instinctively warned by the terrible look on the Russian’s face, started to cry out.

‘Tchekov, stop, man ! What are you——?’

His words were drowned by the deafening report as Tchekov fired, and he fell without a sound as the bullet struck him in the centre of the forehead.

The Russian bent over him. Yes, he was really dead this time. It was a pity, though, about that hole ; it would have been better in that spot at the nape of the neck, as he had always imagined it. He kicked the corpse savagely in the ribs, and spat on it derisively.

With the sound of the shot came the noise of excitement

in the yard below. Men came hurrying out of the canteen thinking it was another attack, and acting from routine made straight for their rooms to get their arms. Tchekov knew there was not a moment to lose, for when the men came in he would be caught with the dead body as a mute testimony of his crime. He must escape at once. Seizing a 'fusil mitrailleuse' from the rack he crossed over to the ammunition case. It was but the work of a moment to smash the lock, and gathering up an armful of cartridge clips he hurried outside, with the automatic gun in his other hand.

They would not catch him alive now, not while he had a cartridge left, and he vowed to sell his life dearly. For the moment he had little to fear from the men outside; if seen, he would be assumed to be on his way to his post, and in any case it was very unlikely that he would be noticed at all in the confusion of the false alarm that he himself had started. He met no one, however, and reached the security of the wall unaccosted, where he turned about, his fusil mitrailleuse ready to blaze at the first man who came towards him.

So intent was he on watching for would-be attackers in front that he was unaware of the silent, white-clad form which was at that moment climbing over the wall behind him. It was a strange coincidence that the Chleuks should have chosen that night to attempt another surprise attack, seeing that they had been so severely repulsed the night before—and particularly strange that in another minute the walls would be lined with men ready to meet them, men who were in reality responding to a false alarm. Yet even now they might have succeeded, had they not chosen to scale the wall in the very spot where Tchekov lay waiting with a deadly machine-gun—for his own comrades!

The clatter of a stone dislodged by the Arab as he descended the parapet warned the Russian of his danger ; he turned swiftly, to see the man not two yards from him, his knife raised to strike. There followed a quick burst of machine-gun fire, and the invader fell dead, with half his head blown off. At the same time his narrow escape from a sudden and violent death had cleared the madness from Tchekov's brain, and with sanity came realisation of what he had done.

The Chleuks were now scrambling over the parapet two three, four at a time, and he knew that on him rested the task of repelling them until help came, for once they had gained a position inside the fort, sheer numbers would decide the rest, and the whole garrison might well be massacred.

He fired continuously and unerringly at point-blank range, and any Arab that gained the top of the parapet died instantly. As soon as one clip of cartridges was empty he slipped in another rapidly, hardly delaying his fire for more than a second. Mercifully the gun never jammed, though he fired it frenziedly, and by the time his comrades arrived, only a few minutes later, the Chleuks had decided that the fire was too fierce and had once more fallen back, defeated. With the exception of the man who had first climbed over the wall, and who now lay dead a few feet inside it, not one Chleuk had set foot within the fort.

IV.

For his 'heroic defence of the fort of Djebel-Zar, single-handed,' Legionnaire Deuxième Class Ivan Tchekov was awarded the Croix de Guerre ; and thus ended the affair at Djebel-Zar,—though Lieutenant Pierry would have given a great deal to know who killed Pereira.

But he never learnt, for Tchekov kept his secret.

BY THE WAY.

WARS and rumours of wars unceasingly : as soon as ever one part of the troubled world grows less unstable, another begins to develop distress. The comedian is often the interpreter, and at the end of December was busy wishing people ' a preposterous New Year.' Old ladies are leaving a city so dangerously situated as London and business men are chary of entering into engagements for more than a few weeks ahead. To such a pass has civilisation brought the earth : there is a good deal to be said for a return to the simplicities and the certainties of what we are pleased to call savagery. But Herr Hitler says he wants peace as long as he is not subjected to ' interference' : so all must be well.

★ ★ ★

And let us listen to the wisdom of the Japanese, once our favoured allies. Here are extracts from a recent broadsheet issued by The Shinn-so in Tokyo :

' The policy of Japan in regard to the present China Incident must be free as far as possible of narrow-mindedness, quick temper, stinginess, self-glorification, monopoly, avarice, exclusivism, and tyranny ; and must contain broad-mindedness, amity, cooperation, conciliation, mutual prosperity, brotherhood of the world and equality. . . . Yet among the people of Europe and America who were even unable to learn any lesson from the great ravage of the World War there still might be some who do not change their attitude and may try to oppose Japan's world policy, being unable to understand the heavenly message contained in the present China Incident. . . . If there be warships or airplanes that dare to approach our sphere of influence, instantly they will be almost entirely shot down or sunk.'

★ ★ ★

I refrain from passing any comment on the following, taken from a recent review written by Mr. A. G. Macdonell, 'Pickthall was educated, as the absurd saying is, at Harrow. He began to live at the age of nineteen when . . .'

* * *

C. E. Lawrence has now been writing fiction for many years, but he is one of those beings, unfortunately by no means common, who whilst their experience deepens lose nothing of their youthful energy or attraction ; at all events it is unquestionable that his latest romance, *Gloriana* (Murray, 7s. 6d. n.), is one of his very best. He has gone for his theme to the days of Elizabeth, not the great days when the Virgin Queen was young and beloved, but the closing days of her reign when she was old and embittered, when no longer Leicester but Essex was the favourite—and Essex was weak and disloyal. Darkening days therefore, but yet the setting for a fresh romance as interesting as it is unusual. Not only has Mr. Lawrence given us a delicately conceived love story, but, greatly daring, he has made his young hero join the immortal company of the Globe, and have Richard Burbage for his leader and Shakespeare for his friend ; and I can recall no imaginative portrayal of Elizabeth at once so intimate, so sympathetic, and so original. This is a distinguished piece of historical fiction which will be read with real pleasure by many of all ages.

* * *

The cult of the incomprehensible continues apace : the latest example to come before me is of American origin, an imported product. The publishers say on the blurb of *The Trouble with Tigers*, by William Saroyan (Faber, 7s. 6d. n.), that 'you can only compare Saroyan with Saroyan.' Gladly I take their word for it : certainly most authors would not

regard comparison with him as a compliment. Here is the first section, complete, of his first story :—

‘ The hushed universe. Footsteps on the side-walk, clear, cold and tragic. The world. Arrival and departure of the empty streetcar from the city to the sea. The year. The clear, cold tragic hum of space. The Word, and the hollow answer of night. Time. The groan of steel contraption going around corner and the mournful cry of horn.’

This might conceivably have a meaning if the other fourteen sections had any relation to it as a set of headings, but they have not. I tried several other stories in the volume, but finally laid it aside, utterly defeated : I could not gather any idea of any one of them, and life has other more arresting puzzles, and yet the critics of his first volume unite to praise it not merely as ‘ unclassifiable ’—which is easy—or as ‘ exasperating ’—which is natural enough—but even as ‘ witty,’ ‘ fascinating ’ or (best touch of all) ‘ serious.’ So that is that.



We are in less unclassifiable country in another book published by Faber, *African Women*, by Sylvia Leith-Ross (15s. n.). Its title suggests a wider field than that which is in fact covered, but that is corrected by the sub-title, ‘ A Study of the Ibo of Nigeria,’ and of that tribe it is authoritative. Mrs. Leith-Ross has spent years in Nigeria, and deals with knowledge and care with the conditions prevailing in the Ibo tribe—and her work has no less a sponsor than Lord Lugard. Another book of investigation by a lady is Grace Thompson Seton’s *Poison Arrows* (Gifford, 12s. 6d. n.), a record of her journeyings in Indo-China and the Isle of Bali. This is not the scholarly sociological work of the former but is an interesting account of adventurous and little known ways,

mostly in company with an odd opium-eating guide ; and it has many excellent illustrations.

★ ★ ★

A third lady writes of a fourth who never travelled farther afield than Bath and yet is among the immortals. Laura M. Ragg has produced a little brochure on *Jane Austen in Bath* (De la More Press, 2s. 6d. n.), with illustrations from contemporary pictures which is a pleasant and attractive addition to the literature gathering round the best loved of our novelists—and as we cannot think of her and not think of Bath also, it is well to have the facts and places recalled and recorded.

★ ★ ★

A fifth lady lives, not of herself but by reason of her husband, for ever famous and beloved in spite of his treatment of her and of his vanities. E. M. Keate has written now the first biography of *Nelson's Wife* (Cassell, 12s. 6d. n.) : until Nelson went to Naples and was ensnared by Lady Hamilton, he was devoted to Fanny whom he had married in 1787 when she was a fascinating young widow resident in the Island of Nevis, Leeward Islands, where she had been born in 1761. The author contrives not unskilfully to tell the unhappy tale without unduly recording all those facts of Nelson's career which are part of our history, and there can be little doubt that of the two protagonists Fanny, first and only Viscountess Nelson of the Nile, was the more generous and greater-minded. This is a useful addition to the bibliography of a great man, even if in it it is but seldom he can appear as great.

★ ★ ★

And even now we have not quite done with the eternal feminine, being called irresistibly by *Judith Quinn* from the pen of Conal O'Riordan (Arrowsmith, 8s. 6d. n.). I remember John Galsworthy remarking late in his life that, try as he would to avoid it, he could not help continuing the

story of the Forsytes ; they had taken hold of him and from their domination of his mind he could not escape—to the great benefit of innumerable readers. So in like manner may it be supposed, and hoped, that the Quinns have taken possession of Conal O'Riordan. At all events his series, dealing in its latest volume with Judith, grand-daughter of Sir David Quinn, 2nd Bart, is removing from England any reproach : it enables us to say that we have on this side of the Atlantic, English yet sired by an Irish father, a set of Quinns who are at least as interesting, quite as distinguished and indubitably longer to live than those Quins of Canada, to see whom—so it is credibly stated—is the main purpose of Their Majesties' visit to that Dominion this summer. Judith Quinn, forward, please—and as her story in this volume does not end without the birth of another David, the family is, we trust, to continue with its fortunes unabated.

★ ★ ★

'For forms of government,' we are told by Pope, 'let fools contest' : certainly there seems in these days wisdom in the saying. And yet 'the proper study of mankind is Man,' and therefore with undiminished zeal we study his methods of governing—or misgoverning—his fellows. Of all recent students none has been better equipped than J. A. Spender, for so many years the mainstay in the departed green *Westminster Gazette* of the Liberal Party—before it was either green or departed—to give us *The Government of Mankind* (Cassell, 12s. 6d. n.). It is said on the dust cover to be 'a book that every intelligent man and woman must read' : that is putting its claims high, but at least it will be generally agreed that most who do read it will be more intelligent afterwards. It is an exhaustive study from the very beginnings until now—for a great part of its length a compendium of history, towards its end an extremely interesting analysis of totalitarianism. There is necessarily

much of so vast a subject that cannot be touched on in 317 pages, but all that is is of value—and more it would be hard to ask.

★ ★ ★

There can be little doubt that there has seldom been a time in history when politics had less poetry in them than at the present time : when they are not blunt to the pitch of brutality they are prosaic, economic, and devoid of either rhythm or beauty. Yet there has never been a time when so many excited souls express the passionate conviction that the only theme for poetry is politics. A further contradiction appears in this, that whereas most of our younger writers intolerantly exalt Communism and all its works, here and there emerge writers, also of the younger sort, to whom Communism is anathema. Of these Roy Campbell is evidently one : he has devoted 157 pages of closely printed rhyming couplets to a virulent diatribe against Communism. His *Flowering Rifle* (Longmans, 6s. n.) is described as ‘a poem from the battlefield of Spain.’ The choice of rhyming couplets for a virulent diatribe is an odd one, but there is no mistaking the force of his convictions. But when was poetry ever so written ? Nor can it be said that Roy Campbell’s work is poetry. Here are some typical lines :

‘As for myself I glory in my crime—
Of English poets first in all my time
To sock the bleary monster in my rhyme,
As first in arms to face this Prince of Wowzers
And drive the bullets through his baggy trousers,
And now to bring, with his bug-eaten head,
The tidings that Democracy is dead.’ . . .

And so on and so forth. No ; the rifle does not flower, either in fact or in these pages—it is made by man for another, and a more sinister, purpose.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 185.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page v, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 31st March.

Thanks to the ——— by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears

1. Thou in the grave shalt rest :—yet, till the phantoms flee,
Which that house and ——— and garden made dear to
thee erewhile,
2. One, with low tones that decide,
And doubt and reverend ——— defied,
With a look that solved the sphere,
3. Hyd, Jonathas, al thy frendly manere ;
Penalopee, and ——— Catoun,
Mak of your wyfhoud no comparisoun ;
4. There let Hymen oft ———
In Saffron robe, with Taper clear,
5. Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright
With tangled gossamer that fell by ———

Answer to Acrostic 183, January number : ' But Rose cross'd the road
In her *latest new bonnet* ;' (Austin Dobson : ' Triolet'). 1. *LamB*
(Blake : ' The Tiger'). 2. *ApollO* (Keats : ' On looking into Chap-
man's Homer'). 3. *TreasoN* (Emerson : ' Uriel'). 4. *EveN* (Shelley :
' Remorse'). 5. *SerpentinE* (Shelley : ' The Question'). 6. *ThaT*
(Browning : ' Home Thoughts from Abroad').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss E. M. Troyte-
Bullock, Naish Priory, North Coker, Yeovil, Somerset, and Mrs. E. D.
Colleyns, 200 Vaughan Road, Harrow, Middlesex, who are invited to
choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

APRIL 1939.

BUCK NAVVIES.

BY H. R. JUKES.

In these days of general debunking it might perhaps be unwise to suggest that romance still lingers about any particular class of men or work. Certainly to hint to the man himself that its attractive aura surrounded the average navvy of my everyday acquaintance would be to invite from that outspoken individual a remark as pointed as his own pick and about as reticently delicate as a steam-shovel.

And now, after ten years of intimate contact with him, I have no illusions either.

It all started in a little Yorkshire valley. I had been dodging about the country trying to find some place where I could make one lung—all that was left from the war—satisfactorily perform the work of two. My search after breathable air led me in the end to a tiny hillside village lying wide of one of the more renowned beauty spots of what is generally known, I believe, as the 'Dales Country.'

It was certainly a very lovely district, with the heathered moorlands just above, woodlands dotting the slopes, and all the lower levels a multi-coloured patchwork of waving meadow-grass and pasture. A little river, dodging impishly about among the trees, gave the dale its name. There was only one road, but a little semi-private railway, constructed by the Corporation of a distant city which had bought various local water rights, ran along the valley bottom. On ordinary days the infrequent passenger traffic was conveyed in a tiny autocar arrangement—locomotive and coach all in one—a most respectable, delightfully intimate turnout,

with a guard in uniform and everything. Once a week, however, on Saturdays, what was locally known as the 'Navvies' Special' ran ; an express, from which all civilians were barred. This was a vastly different affair ; a string of half a dozen pukka coaches, firsts, seconds and thirds (I found out afterwards they had been bought second-hand from a moribund railway now absorbed in the L.M.S.) and actually drawn by a real engine, sometimes two.

Certainly they were small, these locos, but they were pretty ancient and they made up in noise what they lacked in size. They racketed gaily along—clankety, clankety, clank, clank, clank—piping joyously in accordance with the instructions prominently displayed upon the 'Whistle' notice-boards at every level-crossing ; jangling past the merely ordinary travellers waiting on the tiny wayside platforms (there were three of these) with all the lofty condescension somehow affected by most expresses ; and finally pulling up with a series of spasmodic, nerve-shattering jolts alongside the single open platform of the terminus : I will call it Badgerley.

Then began the exodus. The 'Navvies' Special' decanted a heterogeneous horde of people upon the hitherto sleepy little market town. I term it a town by courtesy only ; it was really just a village—one main street of little shops, several higgledy-piggledy rows of tiny cottages just planked down anywhere, a few larger houses towards the outskirts, a chapel or two, a church, a school, a police-station—all the usual amenities—and half a dozen inns.

The population of the place was immediately doubled ; though this phenomenon was noticeable only for a little while. The train arrived barely a short half-hour before 'closing-time' at the various hostelrys, and most of the

male passengers promptly disappeared into various cool interiors. The few womenfolk immediately got busy with their shopping ; on the alert, no doubt, for any sudden juggling with the price tickets of the wares displayed caused by their arrival in the town.

It was a fiercely contested theme of argument, this. All the visitors from ' up top '—as dalehead, where these people lived, was termed—protested volubly that they were charged more for everything, groceries, meat, vegetables, than were the Badgerley natives ; and even though good money was being earned by their menfolk, they saw no reason why it should go into the pockets of such, as I once heard them called, ' blood-sucking parasites ' as the village tradesmen were deemed to be.

Towards three o'clock, when the gates of Paradise closed, there was a general trek of the male persuasion from the various houses of refreshment towards one or other of the three clubs in the town. A benevolent licensing bench had granted these convivial gathering grounds an extra hour's ' time ' ; a concession duly appreciated by the thirsty souls from up the dale, who, as soon as this advantage was discovered, promptly signed on as country members. There they stopped until the return train was due to pull out, at 5.20 I think it was.

This return train was a stirring sight. Every compartment seemed full to overflowing, and yet an apparently endless stream of passengers still continued to pour up the approach-way to the platform. A dozen tradesmen's hand-carts, together with one or two larger vehicles, were parked alongside, hurriedly discharging their contents into the two big goods vans at the rear of the train. Errand-boys, smothered in parcels, dashed hither and thither up the line of coaches, shrieking out in shrill, excited trebles ' Missis

So-and-so? Missis So-and-so?' in a frantic last-minute search for some discriminating customer or other, wise in her generation, who apparently preferred to have her more particular purchases directly under her eye. Youngsters howled or laughed or stolidly munched sweets. The engines blew off steam, their drivers and firemen dispassionately chewing tobacco as they hung over the sides of their cabs watching the *mêlée*. The guard moved agitatedly up and down, exhorting everybody to 'come on, come on,' and pulling out his watch half a dozen times a minute to glance despairingly at the unforgiving dial. When he had shepherded as many passengers as, even in his optimistic opinion, a compartment could possibly hold, he promptly locked them in. And when he had thus disposed of all his normal charges, the large surplus somehow invariably left over he folded to his bosom—literally, I should imagine—in his own van.

A last look round, a whistle, a cloud of steam, and—clankety clank—clankety clank—the train was off; headed, in a series of standing leaps, for that unknown bourne away up at the head of the dale.

Naturally I was interested. They were such a happy, carefree, healthy crowd; so tremendously alive. It bucked you up just to look at them. Somehow they seemed a race apart, different from any I had ever seen and appealing to me strangely. I met some of the men during those odd half-hours I mentioned. The little room of the inn would be quiet and dull and almost empty; perhaps just some old farmer or other and myself yarning over our ale. Suddenly the door would open and there would be an influx of huge, weather-beaten men, some few in ordinary suits, but most of them in corduroy and fustian, their faces shining and richly ingrained with that full-blooded network of little

veins which makes a man look as though he has just been shaved with a piece of glass.

They slid contentedly into place along the settees built in against the walls and with a casual flick or two of the wrist jerked the heavy iron tables into position. Judging by the landlord's demeanour they were favoured customers. 'Pint !' 'Pint !' 'Pint and a double !' 'Number Five !'—orders were many and varied.

The 'pints and doubles' appealed to me. It seemed a favourite combination. A double whisky, taken neat, and then a pint of beer as a chaser. It struck me as being a sound way to invoke the state of beatitude the consumer was evidently aiming at. Whisky by itself, though effective enough perhaps in creating atmosphere, would leave a certain amount of bulk unfilled. Beer alone would fill the gap but, with its milder alcoholic content, leave the possibly rather depressing state of world-affairs in much the same condition as it was before. Combining the two apparently worked well. In the two hours or so at his disposal my friend from 'up top' could get just nicely mellowed. I never saw one even slightly drunk. Perhaps there wasn't time. All the liquor seemed to do was perhaps to melt their inherent reserve a little. They might unbend enough to nod as they went out.

Big men, quiet, tremendously self-contained. Even between themselves they spoke but little. They spent their money royally. A double whisky was eighteenpence at that time, and a pint of beer—the beer they drunk, anyway—eightpence. Two and twopence a time. And they drank solemnly, steadily, and amazingly quickly. What they lived on up there I didn't know ; I imagined salt pork. But whatever it was, as a thirst-provider it was obviously great medicine.

Nobody in the town seemed to know very much about the work upon which these men were employed. A big reservoir was being built eleven miles away up among the moors at the head of the dale. A wild, uncouth country from what they said, though actually very few had ever been up ; but over and above that, there was very little information to be gleaned. Dalesfolk are apt to be a trifle reserved, too. Except in the way of business they did not consort much with these temporary neighbours. The two sharply contrasted types did not mix, that was all. Each, I suppose, in his heart despised the other. There were individual exceptions, I dare say, but I didn't meet any.

I came to look forward to these Saturdays. They did me good. My health had improved considerably and I found my single cylinder working quite passably well upon the varied assortment of airs the dale provided. Soon I could pass muster among the usual crowd.

But that was not enough—now ! The sight of those lusty fellows from 'up top' had changed all that. They had inspired me ; had shown me what health could really mean. Even in my fittest days I had never been like one of these.

They were still taking men on, I heard, from time to time as the work progressed ; navvies, mechanics, loco and crane drivers, platelayers—all manner of men. Surely, thought I, there must be some sort of executive job which even I might fill.

So I wrote for one, and got it.

The next Monday morning found me aboard the little autocar, bound for what, in the villagers' opinion, was Ultima Thule. I began to think they might be right, for I found that civilisation stopped at a little hamlet four miles short of my destination. The railway lines ran on ; I

could see them ; but beyond this point was apparently sacrosanct. No civilian transport, either by road or rail, was allowed without due authority. A pair of substantial gates, flung across both roadway and rail-track, as well as various notice-boards proclaimed the fact.

Inquiry from the one official at the tiny station elucidated the remark that a lorry from the works was actually in the yard, waiting to pick up some special stores which had been brought up on the train by which I myself had travelled. Perhaps I could get a lift by that . . .

Of course I could. I was welcomed. Straight away I was to find that splendid spirit of help and companionship which pervaded all the ten years I was to stay at the place. As it turned out I was to discover that my presence had meant a most uncomfortable journey for two other men, but I had to ascertain that fact for myself. They did not tell me ; I was a new-comer—the best that they could offer was mine by right.

What a glorious drive that was. Once through the gates which shut off the outside world, a most entrancing, intimate little valley opened out ; narrow, steep-sided, clothed in straggling woods of fir and pine, chestnut and sycamore, with here and there a blush of heather peeping over from the moors above ; meadows in the bottom, hedges, trees and flowers ; great limestone cliffs ; a tiny river dancing along not fifty yards away ; and that clean, white road, with the railway lines immediately alongside, winding away before me into the unknown.

Always we were climbing ; a steady, never varying gradient ; and always, it seemed, new and yet more exciting bits of country came into view. We rounded a corner, a narrow gorge between two towering rock faces where a tunnel had had to be blasted through to ease the bend for

railway traffic, and at once we seemed to be shut in by high, steep-sided hills. They reared up sharply from the narrow strip of pastureland and meadow which filled the valley bottom. The trees grew fewer, changing also in variety. Chestnuts and sycamores gave place to thorns and rowans; and soon even these became sparse and scattered. The hillsides were bare ; just great, towering masses of limestone rock and scree rising above rough benty 'intakes,' with here and there a tongue of heather reaching down almost to the road. Ahead, blocking the top of the valley, lay the flanks of two tremendous hills, their crests among the clouds. The dalesmen had not been misinformed ; it was 'wild country' all right.

Still climbing, up and up, level now with the heather line on the far side of the river still tumbling along, although now some two hundred feet or so below us. A great, mile-long gash on the opposite hillside loomed into view, a maze of naked cliffs and tumbled spoil-banks. My friend at the wheel somehow caught my eye. 'The quarry,' he explained.

I stared at the vast size of it, a dozen questions on my lips. I had not time to voice them. Another bend in the road took me into full view of the works themselves. Sheds, buildings, railway sidings (I found out later there were seventeen miles of broad-gauge track and another nine of narrow), great blue shale-tips, stacks of timber, puffs of steam rising from countless engines of one sort or another, locomotives and cranes—acres and acres of high-pressure industry. Knots of men worked busily here and there ; navvies, platelayers—all sorts of men. We rattled along the rough and stony road, bouncing over crossings, dodging heaps of coal and sand and ballast. The hum of machinery filled the air. The gaunt frameworks of two aerial con-

veyors reared up towards the sky, their cables stretching thread-like three hundred feet above the river bed from one side of the valley to the other. Even as we approached a huge iron skip lifted swiftly up from one of the buildings by the roadside, came to rest a moment silhouetted high against the blue, and then, dipping and swooping like a swallow, swung dizzily away along its lofty journey to the other side. A train of concrete skips, twelve of them, came rocking and swaying at full speed along the railway at our side, towering over us as it passed. A crane jib suddenly swung round, a 40-foot baulk of timber in its grip. We paused a moment until it passed. Telephone wires and power cables ran everywhere. It was an amazing sight; a strange phenomenon to come across in the midst of those wild and desolate moorland fastnesses.

About a mile of this, and then our road came to an end. In front of us yawned a vast trench, fifty or sixty yards in width, eight hundred long and, at the point where we were, almost three hundred feet in depth. 'Foundations for the dam,' my friend explained. 'You'll be wanting the office? That's it.'

A long, one-storied wooden building was this office. I could see men working in its many rooms as I passed the uncurtained windows, men striving with heavy ledgers, others with blue prints—all seemingly pretty busy and intent upon their jobs.

I was shown in to the engineer, a Scotsman with whom I felt at ease at once. I was expected. All arrangements had been made; my bed and board, my work, my everything. In five minutes I was at home.

At home! It was to be my home for ten full years!

The job inflicted upon me, I found, brought me into more or less intimate contact with the thousand or so buck

navvies employed about the works. It took me quite a while to get to recognise even a few of them; for the names on the official rolls were, I found, very different from those by which the men were known to their work-mates and gangers. Nicknames were the rule, and any personal detail of whatever sort was excuse enough to tag on some descriptive adjective or other. A one-armed man was known as 'Wingy'—one with a wooden leg as 'Peg.' Anyone above 6 foot 2 or 3 was referred to as 'Slen', a diminutive of 'slender,' I suppose, although some 'Slens' were obviously far from being devotees of the modern fashionable cult for slimming. The names of towns, used by virtue of birth or long association, were possibly the most frequent; 'Bradford,' 'Brummy,' 'Dublin.' I would inquire for Jesse Burborough, the name on the books, but nobody in the gangs had ever heard of him. For forty years he had been known to his mates as 'Oxford Slen' and nothing else. 'Isle o' Wight,' 'Spanner Jack,' 'Mad Bristol,' 'Dancing Fanny'—a man actually named after a Clydesdale mare his father had once driven—'Mouching Taff,' 'Sailor'; there were scores of these pseudonyms. In some of them the aptness of the association was difficult to see. However, inside a month, I was using them myself.

In fact, inside a month I was doing many things. Life moved very swiftly up there, I found. There was always something 'on.' Money had been lavishly spent on the amenities of the place. There was a huge concert hall, a cinema (with a change of programme twice a week) a canteen, shops, school, church, gymnasium, tennis-court, billiards—everything. The whole place was self-contained, splendidly so. And everything going all out. They were enthusiastic livers; everybody always seemed to be on the very top of their form. I began to enjoy myself.

I think some of the smoking concerts—males only, of course—were the funniest. One night we took over the canteen, three hundred of us. We engaged a full professional orchestra—orchestras were easy to get; they liked coming—and we parked them on a beautiful, flower-decked platform we had rigged up in a corner. We elected a chairman—the resident doctor—and got to work.

Music alone filled the air at first, and then concerted song. Then solos. Some of those solos were a riot! The chairman, wise, understanding soul, soon retired from his eminent position and took up a more inconspicuous seat at the rear of the hall. As is always the way, at first nobody wanted to sing: after a couple of hours everybody did! The stewards had their work cut out. One ebullient songster—only a little chap, but he had once played scrum-half in the Rugby League and brought the knowledge gained on many a hard fought field into play—slipped through the cordon and scrambled up on to the stage under cover of the piano. I don't think the majority of us had noticed him at all until he suddenly burst forth into a joyous tenor aria. It was an action song—or 'Snowy' made it so—*con espressione*. His first notes hit the roof, and a magnificent Napoleonic gesture of his left hand nearly felled the chap with the bull-fiddle. It rather upset him—or our laughter did; it might have been either. But it was nothing to what was coming. 'Snowy' drew himself up with solemn dignity, I believe with the original intention of calling our behaviour into question, stepped back a pace, and the upper edge of the big drum caught him behind the knees.

The drummer evidently played many parts. He had a wonderful assortment of gadgets in front of him; two drums, cymbals, tapping-boards, a triangle—I don't know

what else. They all went over with 'Snowy.' I never heard such a row in my life. The songster sat up, surrounded by flowers and shining brass, smiled benignantly around and, from this safe position, promptly began the yodelling song from, I think, 'William Tell.' We cheered him to the echo.

Sometimes we had these 'smokers'—rather more exclusive ones—at one of the larger inns down the dale. A trip would be arranged, taxis or a bus got up, and then, immediately after the evening meal, the convoy would set off. 'Sunday' clothes, of course, for these 'dos'; white cords, moleskin waistcoats, black silk neckerchiefs, boots in which you could see yourself—full levee dress, in fact.

The biggest room in the place would be put at our disposal, the one used for the annual farmers' dinners and suchlike functions; a piano brought in, tables and chairs arranged, and all other movables surreptitiously taken away.

As is our way, we entered shyly; being ushered like so many sheep by the amicable but watchful publican into the fold arranged for us. Somebody would place a hat in the middle of the table, and into this everyone threw what loose money he thought fit. The resultant sum—the equivalent of perhaps an hour's supplies—would then be formally handed over, still in the hat, to the waiting landlord.

This sordid, but necessary detail disposed of—for the time being!—we would settle down. Pints—all pints—would be brought in and the proceedings were open. Someone would be called upon for a song, and after the usual bashful remonstrances he would mount the little dais fixed up at the end of the room. A muttered conversation, very serious, would ensue between him and the pianist and an arrangement come to. If the latter knew the song, well and good: if not, a few bars would be breathed into his

ear, and after a suitable vamping rhythm had been found and a trial chord or two approved of, the show was on. With a flamboyant double-forte run up the keys the pianist would arrest attention. Conversation died down. A few nervous pluckings at his neckerchief and the first notes of a sadly sentimental ditty would come floating down over the now half-empty pint pots.

I wonder why all the 'rough-necks' of the world prefer this 'sob-stuff.' Soldiers, sailors, miners, navvies—nine out of ten of their favourite songs are about somebody (male) dying, or (female) 'being wronged.' I've seen the sort of chap who in the ordinary way would have cheerfully kicked anybody's brains out on the slightest provocation, get up on to his hind legs and drool out the most sickening, slushy stuff imaginable. And feel it too; be obviously distressed about the sorrow he was ventilating—almost as distressed as I was!

Well, the night would hasten along its allotted way. Pints would be refilled by the watchful waiter; song would follow song. Someone might tell a story, and, encouraged, go on to tell a few more, each a little more colourful than the previous one. Half-way through what might, or might not, have actually been meant to be the last of them, the landlord would tiptoe in and, with whispered apologies for disturbing the artiste, would slide the hat on to the table—empty. There would come a vociferous yell from the nearest member of the party—we ourselves suffered from no puerile inhibitions about the reverence due to the Stage—and a second shower of coins would rattle down on to the table. Rather bigger coins this time: we were getting warmed up.

Chorus songs became popular. One especially I remember. There was a yodel in this one, too; and to hear the

variety of choking noises as the assembled company tried to join in was an education. One or two refrained ; the chap on my right, a huge, elderly Jock called 'Sandy,' among them.

'Why aren't *you* singing, Sandy ?' I inquired lightly.

He half turned to look at me reprovingly. Grave, aloof, dignified, all his native Scots austerity in his eyes ; I thought I must have offended him.

'Gie's me hiccups,' he explained.

With ever-increasing frequency the hat appeared. No check whatever was taken on what amount it contained or whether or no we got full value. We were gentlemen, not tradesfolk.

Somebody produced a concertina, and for half an hour the discordant strains mingled with the noise of conversation and the ever more frequent bursts of jovial laughter from one group or another. A little Lancashire chap jumped on the dais and gave a clog-dance. He had pukka clogs on too ; beautifully fashioned little things with white eyelet-holes and ornamentation. And then, *mirabile dictu*, some joker produced a set of pipes. A full man's set. I expected a riot, but instead of that a heavy seriousness seemed to fall upon a majority of the revellers. Half a dozen of the biggest men in the room rose grandly to their feet and stalked majestically towards the platform. A dignified altercation ensued between them. Piping was no light matter apparently, and there appeared to be some ritual of precedence involved. However, at last it was settled and the pipes reverently handed over to—I noticed with some surprise—my erstwhile companion 'Sandy.'

I am no Scot, and I think bagpipes should be played outside. But the sight of that gigantic Jock, big and broad, rugged as his native granite, standing there with the pipes

under his arm and the brave tartan streamers fluttering around him . . . There was pride of race there all right.

The pipes took us on until closing time. 'Finals'—all 'short' ones—appeared by the trayful, and as promptly disappeared, one lot after another. It was terrific. Somehow I seemed to get a fleeting glimpse of what Macbeth's banquet hall might have looked like.

However, at last the convoy was whistled up and in we got ; with a wondering crowd of wide-eyed village yokels, standing well back out of harm's way, to see us off. Half an hour later we were at home.

'Jags,' they called these full-blooded outings. Sometimes we went farther afield, into one of the big cities, and generally when we wanted to see some special show—a tattoo, a super-film, something of that sort—any kind of a peg to hang the excuse upon. We would arrange to meet afterwards at the garage where the bus, or buses, had been parked ; but an hour before that time little coteries of our fellows could be found in all the near-by pubs, swapping the time of day with a crowd of pseudo-sophisticated townees. At that time of night some of the latter's outlooks and opinions were apt to prove a trifle supercilious. They didn't meet a mob of innocents like us every day. It was a rare opportunity for them to show their paces ; hoping, no doubt, to be rewarded by a free drink from some of us supposedly awestruck yokels. They got free drinks a-plenty, but it was not due to any admiration on our part, as I dare say they put it down to ; it was merely the navy's innate generosity and utter inability to hang on to his money.

But occasionally *we* scored. I remember once standing up at the bar with one of our gangers, one of the 'Slens,' a long, gaunt, gipsy-looking fellow, with a grisly trickle

of tobacco juice perpetually lurking in the corner of his mouth. We had just dropped in for a last one before getting the bus. A big, beery, bookmaker sort of chap, his hat pushed back at a wonderful angle and a cigar cocked between his teeth, was leaning on the counter ogling the ornately caparisoned blonde behind the bar. As he talked he continually spanned thumb and forefinger across the top one of a pile of coarse dinner-plates stacked on the mahogany in front of him : I suppose they were used for sandwiches. He could just manage to lift it and put it down again.

Apparently he was very proud of this trick, for, as the barmaid grasped the pump handle to draw our pints, he turned with a self-satisfied, smug sort of grin round towards us. 'Biggest span in Bradford,' he bragged. 'Biggest span in Bradford. I bet you've never seen a span like that, eh?' He did it again to show us.

Well, my own hand is comparatively small, but 'Slen's' extremities were a joke all over the works. They were almost a deformity. In the ordinary balance of nature they would have had to be long to fit that lanky body ; but as they were . . . My companion merely reached across the two of us, crooked his long, emaciated-looking thumb and fingers down the edges of the plates and lifted half a dozen. The bookie fellow goggled, while his inamorata behind the bar let out a startled little shriek. Well she might ! The sight of those gaunt, curving talons, each finger looking as long as a foot-rule, coiling slowly round the edges of those plates was enough to give anybody the horrors. They looked like a vulture's. And with that dark, saturnine face behind them, unsmiling, uninterested almost . . .

Our bookie friend was quiet. He hadn't recovered by the time we left.

Of course the trick was old stuff to men like 'Slen.'

There were many like him who had some little physical peculiarity or other and would trot it out at times for the amusement of the crowd in the canteen or reading-room at home. Tricks of strength, as was perhaps natural, were commonest. One chap had got off the knack of lifting a heavy chair by the bottom of one of the front legs. The leverage was, of course, enormous ; how he did it I don't know—I couldn't move the thing. Then every now and then, during the midday lunch-hour, there would be impromptu weight-lifting contests ; all sorts of lifts, in all sorts of ways, from two hundredweight cement bags to bits of railway.

They were strong fellows. I never saw such chaps. Some of the things they did were simply ridiculous, unbelievable. But of course, after all, that was their job.

We had a ju-jutsu enthusiast came to us once ; a light, sandy-haired fellow, name of 'George.' I imagine that actually he was rather good at the game, too. However, after a couple of trial bouts he chucked it just to save his own life.

Boxers, as might be expected, were common. We had many ex-naval men and many more brought up in a tougher school still—broken-down old 'pugs' and sparring partners ; quiet, unassuming, patient fellows, all of them, invariably using their influence on the side of decorum and order.

But decorum and order were the rule, really. At no time was there any of the roaring, he-man stuff one sees, or saw, so often in the films of mining and other life. If two men got across, say in the canteen, there was no shouting or scrapping there. The two would quietly rise, maybe with a couple of their friends, and just sidle inconspicuously out of the door and make their way down to the timber-yard—'where the bulls feed,' as it was facetiously known.

There the matter would be settled and the general company would not have been disturbed in the slightest ; not known anything about it, in fact.

But the next day would be a *dies non* all right for both of *them*.

I loved some of those nights in the canteen. Heavy tile-topped tables, seating maybe half a dozen, were scattered over the room, and round these would gather individual little coteries of kindred spirits ; some tables noisy and hard-drinking, others comparatively quiet and reserved. Often, I think, the choice made by some of the habitués was a matter of finance. I liked it best, though, when not very many would be in, one of the 'off nights,' when, instead of our sitting round the tables, chairs and stools would be drawn up round one or other of the great roaring fires at either end of the room. Then, under the mellowing influence of firelight and ale, with maybe a background of suitable 'noises off' created by a raging blizzard outside, some of the older hands (we had several over seventy) might be prevailed upon to tell us something of their careers up and down the world.

They had remarkable stories to tell, some of these old fellows ; tales of every country under the sun, from the Klondyke of '98 to the Kimberley diamond mines, Buenos Ayres to Ballarat, Simonstown, Nova Scotia, Singapore ; stories told in a casual, unpretentious way whose very simplicity gave wings to the imagination. 'I used to play the concertina every night in a pub at Ferrol . . .'—'I went "on tramp" from Detroit . . .'—'Once in a dope and dolly shop in Shanghai . . .'

Well-read fellows, too, many of them. One I remember especially ; an old time-serving soldier who knew all Burns—all Burns—by heart and could quote glibly from half a

dozen other poets. 'Fill me with the old familiar juice' might raise no more than a smile when given as a reply to the usual question; but it was a little startling—until one knew him—to be gently ushered out of harm's way down on the works, an explanatory finger pointing at the same time to a swinging crane-jib, by the quotation—

*'Look with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground.'*

He took the sting out of a trapped hand for me, too, when he consolingly murmured in my ear—

*'Ay me, what perils do environ
The man who meddles with cold iron.'*

I thought, at first, Charlie must be an exception; and in a way, of course, he was. But there were plenty of others.

There was old—— Well, I won't give his name, save to say that he is known by that of one of the most ancient and famous of Irish cities. He was far and away the best looking man I ever saw, white hair, clear skin, of magnificent physique and straight as a ramrod in spite of his sixty odd years, with a disposition as gentle and kindly as his own west-country breezes. He took Father Christmas at all the children's parties, and at any of our British Legion or other festivities it was always he who, surreptitiously, took on the washing-up and dirty work. Half a dozen of us would go through to do the job, only to find Pat in his shirt-sleeves already there and the clean, dried plates all stacked away. We called a committee meeting to move a resolution giving him some token of our appreciation, and I myself was deputed to approach him as to what he would like. We had thought of a case of pipes, something of that sort.

But when I tackled him, and at last had overcome his protestations, he shyly asked me, in his delicately flavoured brogue : ‘ Well, sorr, there’s one thing I *would* like to have of my own. D’you think a copy of Yeats’s poems would be after costing too much ? ’ Six feet two, fifteen stone—poems !

We had a great many Irishmen, of course ; eight or nine hundred of them. They weren’t *all* poets !

All the same, most of them had some story to tell, grave or gay, about the ‘ ould counthry.’ They had the legends and the folk-lore of their particular district at their fingertips—leprechauns, ghostly salmon, ‘ little people ’—I never knew such chaps for the supernatural. Weather lore, too, they professed to be versed in, and when proved wrong, always had some totally irrelevant excuse or other ; maybe they’d met a cross-eyed cat on the road, and that had, of course, altered everything.

One of the best schemes in this line was that employed by ‘ Oxford.’ His bed was alongside the window of the cubicle he occupied, and on retiring at night he hung his stocking over the sill. The following morning he would just reach out sleepily and draw it in. If it felt freshly wet he knew it was raining and stayed where he was. Like Issachar, he knew that rest was good.

Superstition was rife as to the treatment of cuts and other wounds. One old fellow, for instance, when he jabbed himself badly with a rusty nail, took pains to remove the offending cause from its piece of timber and ceremoniously burnt it, no doubt with the correct words of incantation. Very definitely he attributed his long immunity from blood poisoning to this peculiar form of homeopathy.

And dreams—dreams were sent for a purpose ; especially those to do with horseflesh. If anyone dreamt of a winner

the whole place backed it. 'Whether or no it came up made no difference. It could not possibly be the dream which was wrong; it was our interpretation of it, and of course with an Irishman's ingenuity in that line, there was generally little difficulty in finding some more or less remote 'pointer' that had been missed.

All the same, they were wonderful chaps at finding winners. I recall, very vividly, talking one night, a few years ago now, in one of the inn taprooms a few miles down the dale. Somehow one of our navvies had wandered in and was just sitting there quietly in a corner, puffing stolidly at his pipe and with a pint of ale in front of him. My friend and I were chatting with the landlord about the following day's—'Cambridgeshire' I think it was. The old chap in the corner, so far as we saw, was not paying the slightest attention to anything except his own thoughts; but as he finished his drink and rose to go he just remarked: 'Pullover'll win!'

'Pullover' was at the bottom of the betting list at 150-1. But it won all right.

Wherever do they get these tips?

Cards, too—most of them were pretty hot at cards. One time I was watching a school playing some rather outlandish form of poker and, as invariably, they were playing for pretty high stakes. The game drew to a close and, having one pet card trick of my own which I am rather proud about, I just picked up the pack and said jocularly, 'See, I'll show you how to deal.' And, after a bit of what I thought quite good manipulation, I dealt myself four aces and another card. They smiled politely, and then, with a wink at his companions, one of them took the pack from me.

I never saw anything like it, on the stage or off. He dazzled me. I never felt such a damned fool in my life.

The pack was passed round. They were *all* expert, all of them ; one was as good as another ; they could do what they liked with a pack. I show them how to deal, forsooth !

Race meetings, anywhere within fifty or sixty miles, were naturally highly popular venues. Men would save up for them ; going strictly T.T. for weeks before. Then a party of them would have a real go. Sometimes I have seen them come back in style, always a day or two late, and even then possessed of a wad of notes as thick as a man's thumb. At other times they would cheerfully admit with a Rabelaisian luxury of unprintable metaphor, that they had been 'on tramp.' They stuck together ; no one walked back or lost any bit of the enjoyment if there was a winner among them.

Loyalty, I think, was their most well-developed trait. They might cheerfully put their foot through each of the ten commandments one after the other, but they wouldn't let a pal down. Never would we come away before the whole party was assembled or we definitely knew that the missing one intended to stay over, and of his own accord. Specially typical was this of—I might almost call them the 'Three Musketeers.' A grim trio, those three. One of them might roll up at the rendezvous alone, having missed his two friends somewhere or other. He would inquire if they had turned up yet. If not, he went to find them, and sensibly enough, the first places he called upon were the various police-stations, asking plaintively at each one in turn, 'Have you two chaps called—and—locked up ?'

If he found them there he would demand to be locked up with them, having first arranged for a message to be sent back to us that all three were 'all right.'

But one dear little chap, a painter—he had actually been a male nurse at one time—very frequently did get lost. He

would make excursions on his own to the most unlikely places, and, respectable little soul as he was, Charlie always dressed up as a civilian for his solitary gallivants. Quite a few of the younger 'black-gang' fellows—engineers and mechanics—mounted a collar on Sundays, but Charlie went the whole hog. Billycock hat, black coat, striped trousers, stiff linen collar and 'dickey,' four-in-hand tie, light townee boots—he looked what he was, one of the shining lights of our little church.

But every now and then he trod the slippery places and backslid rather badly. Once he got locked up; but instead of taking things philosophically and dropping off into a deep and healing sleep, as did the others—who had, no doubt, acquired wisdom at its usual price—Charlie, in a considerable state of flux, loftily demanded that his captors should at once ring up the resident engineer—no less—at the works and get him bailed out.

But it was seed sown upon stony ground. Charlie slept with the others.

Those others! One of them told me once that it was always a relief to him every morning when he woke up not to find himself in gaol.

Strangely enough, as I believe I have mentioned before, we never had trouble of any sort actually on the works. We had a resident policeman, a huge chap weighing seventeen or eighteen stone (not that that had any influence), but really he had nothing to do. The only times he was noticeably in evidence was when the County Constabulary came up in full pomp looking for 'wanteds' for murder. Public Works, with their floating populations, are favourite hiding-places. The gangers themselves start what labourers they require, chosing them without formality or inquiry of any sort from the many who roll up every morning in

not be given one. He might have tramped all the way from Newcastle, or Hull, or any other place for that matter, and would now have to tramp back. A quick whip-round would be organised at once, and the coins given would not be coppers or threepenny-bits: everyone gave royally—'it might be my turn next'—and the old fellow, the mud of his last wayfaring not yet dry upon his boots, would set off on the weary search once more, but with ten or twelve pounds, perhaps more, in his purse to help him on his way.

It was really splendid, this generous, unquestioning comradeship. I never came across it elsewhere, save in the war. There were no unctuous, hypocritical restrictions or words of advice as to how he should spend the money. What matter if the whole lot *was* blued-in at the next pub? 'The poor devil will have had a good drink, anyway.'

Any man off work six weeks got a collection. It made up what he had lost in wages. We weren't quite masters of our fate but, collectively, we came very near to it. Nobody was going to lose by bad luck if we could help it.

Sentimentalists? Perhaps. But do not forget that these were men with a contemptuous familiarity with the world, the flesh and the devil; men who knew toil as few men know it, privation, violence and debauchery, famine and thirst and all the rest of the miseries; hard-bitten toughs who had no fear of anything or anyone on earth, and who would have smashed the tablets of the law into smithereens with one deft crack of their twenty-eight-pound hammers. Sentimentalists they might be; cynicism and meanness were the things they most despised.

What are we to say of the canteen manager, extending a welcome to half a dozen rain-soaked, hungry immigrants who, arriving late one night, asked for a crust of bread at

the only place in the village where there happened to be a light, and who met them with the words, 'Come away in, bhoys, I've the side of a pig in there'?

The 'side of a pig.' Maybe it wouldn't be too much after all. They had appetites commensurate with their size, most of these navvies. Nine hours' work in the keen mountain air, hard muscular work, stirred up the digestive organs better than any *apéritifs*. The food in the hostels was good, but of necessity all men had to have the same. It fell rather hard on a few of the older men whose teeth perhaps were not quite what they were. One old fellow, I'll call him 'Warwick,' ate what he could of the softer foods put down before him, but for meat he relied upon his own private purchase. He had half a dozen very luscious chops brought up every morning, and these he used to fry himself during the half-hour allowed for the midday break. For a frying-pan he used a specially-kept navvy's shovel, burnished like silver and always spotlessly clean. The half-dozen chops would be placed on this and then cooked over one of the braziers. It made a first-class utensil, for all the gravy ran down into the two hollows each side of the blade, where the end of the shaft went in, a very handy position for basting, and of course the long, balanced handle gave him 'absolute control of heat adjustment. The odour of chops filled all the shed. I tell you, old 'Warwick' made our mouths water.

Actually most of the men were pretty good cooks, and what surprised me at first, considering their general 'rough-neck' character, was the fastidiousness displayed by all but a very few. While 'on tramp' they might 'drum up'—make tea—in any old tin can, but before use that tin would be scoured and scoured and scoured until the inside of it shone like a mirror. They might be frying a snared bunny

or a few eggs pilfered from some unlucky hen-roost ; on occasion perhaps something more succulent still (for a navvy can appreciate a grouse or pheasant as well as anybody), but invariably, I found, the box lid which might be serving as a cooking tin was scrupulously clean, as was also the blade of the jack-knife with which the carcase was dissected.

I used to envy some of these old stagers. Frequently a dozen or more would purposely roll up, one by one or by twos and threes, on the Saturday ; so that they could have a week-end's rest before applying for, and probably obtaining, work on the Monday. If it were summer weather they wouldn't bother about hostel accommodation—with its charges and restrictions—but would all gather in the purlieus of an isolated and deserted old farmhouse, partly demolished preparatory to its future flooding over by the waters of the reservoir. There they would encamp, two or three attending to the domestic arrangements while the others wandered off into the village and cajoled what food they required out of the inhabitants, together with a few odd bottles of beer from the sympathetic souls in the Canteen.

A very fair haul they made, too.

Sometimes I used to come past this farmhouse on my way home after an evening's fishing, and the sight of those contented old rascals, sitting quietly over their wood fire, with the soft night air all about them, trees, and birds twittering sleepily, and a clear, soft sky overhead, with probably not a coin of the realm—or a care in the world—between them. . . . Oh, well ; the tang of wood-smoke always gets me like that !

As a matter of fact, I think they felt these things, too. They must have. Scores and scores of times, on some bright sunny morning when the whole outside world has

seemed richly alive and every wild thing as light-hearted and irresponsible as it possibly could be, I have known one after the other of these restless old fellows call at the pay-window for his 'time.'

'What's wrong, "Snowy"? Got across with the ganger?'

'Snowy' would smile. Then, with an expressive sweep of his arm towards the sun-bathed world around him, 'My feet itch,' he would explain simply. 'I'm going for a walk.'

He might have half a crown to draw. Half a crown with which to face the world again! With no definite idea, even, where he intended making for. Yes, I think they felt the call all right.

I wonder where it took them. I have often wondered. Perhaps, in the end, to the other side of the world, to some contract for a naval base, or a railway, perhaps a dam like this one. Maybe only as far as the next 'spike' or work-house. But wherever it may be, from my experience one thing is pretty certain. That place will be all the richer for their presence.

STREET SCENE.

BY JAMES FERGUSSON.

I CANNOT now remember what had kept me so late abroad that night. It is more than fifty years ago : I was a small boy, scarcely ten years old. I was probably down at the harbour, where I used to spend so much of my time. The sights and the colours of the quays fascinated me almost more by night than in the broad day. There would be the ships moored along the sides of the basin, their great square-topped prows heaving up and down against the stars ; the grimy lanterns hung at each vessel's poop, that threw long shadows swinging to and fro across the cobbles ; the inky waves swelling and splashing along the ships' sides and the stone wall of the quay ; and the smell of tarry ropes and old sacks flavouring the wind off the sea. Moreover, I never tired of peeping into the little wooden taverns along the water-front, where one could see the sailors drinking—Venetians, Spaniards, Greeks, Genoese, Portuguese, Moors, negroes, and many others whose race I could only guess at. I can remember those evenings at the harbour better than much I have seen since.

Well, be the cause what it may, I had stayed out for a long time that evening, and I was hurrying home, wondering what my mother would say when I reached it, and whether I should get any supper, or only a beating. I told myself that my mother should be more reasonable now, since there was nothing that could harm me in the city, and we no longer lived in fear of a sudden descent of the Ottoman's ships. Was it not only a few days since the Governor's

proclamation had set us all dancing in the very streets for joy at our deliverance from that ancient peril? I remembered the clamorous triumph of the bells, and the bonfires that had blazed in the market-place. Only two galleys rode at anchor fully manned by the harbour-mouth now, instead of the former ten; and it was said that the very beacon-guard was set no longer in the citadel, such was our present security. Nevertheless my mother did not like me to be roaming the streets after dark, and this evening I had certainly disobeyed her in staying out so late. So, although the night was moonless, I ran along through the silent streets, which I knew as well as a rabbit knows his own patch of wood, leaping steps and kennels, slipping nimbly from arch to arch, and already thinking what face I should put on and what words I should have on my lips when I knocked at my mother's door.

I was in the same street, I remember, where I had watched the Venetian envoy pass a few hours earlier, going up with torches before him to sup with the general and his captains at the citadel. As I hurried up it I heard a confused noise beyond a narrow alley which opened into it from the left. The regular beating of a man's footsteps had stopped suddenly, a voice cried some words I could not distinguish, there was a clash of swords.

Brawls were not uncommon in the town at night; but with a boy's curiosity I halted, wondering if it would be safe to creep up the alley and see what was happening. After listening for a moment, however, I thought it better to go on. There was the sound of a heavy fall, a sword rang upon the stones, and a second, deeper voice called: *'Help, ho! Murder! Murder!'*

If murder was the case, I thought, the sooner I reached home the better. The officers would be out before long, for

the wounded man had a lusty voice and continued to cry for help. I hurried up the street with my heart pounding at my ribs, doubled to the left, crossed another street, ducked under a low archway—and found suddenly that I had taken a wrong turning. I was in a narrow passage with but one entrance, where a single lantern with a guttering wick hung above a doorway. I realized that I should have kept on for another twenty yards and turned through the next archway. Hastily I darted back towards the corner.

But I stopped short as I reached it. A man was coming up the street, going towards the citadel with steady silent steps. I feared lest he might be one of the men whose quarrel I had heard; and as he approached I remained upright and motionless, pressing my body against the wall of the passage and trying with all my might to hold my panting breath.

The night was troubled with a gusty wind. It blew up the street from the direction of the harbour, bringing with it the sound of groans and shuffling footsteps from the corner where I had heard the fighting. Someone cried, '*Who's there?*' The wounded man still shouted for help, and the new voice answered him. But the man who was coming towards me neither turned his head nor quickened his pace. He strode on his way, erect and solemn, moving as though some great purpose lay before him from which he would not turn aside.

As he crossed the mouth of the passage the lanterns flickering light fell for a second full upon his face. I shivered as I looked, although I was sure he could not see me. The face was very dark, with a short curled black beard and a crisp moustache. The nose was curved, the cheek hollow yet firm, and the full lips set like rock. One would have called it a noble face, but for the eyes, which were fixed,

wide open, and glaring, like those of a man upon the rack. It was the sight of those eyes that appalled me ; and my fear was deepened as I realized that I knew the man. It was the foreign general whose ships had entered the harbour a fortnight before, with all the guns of the citadel thundering louder than the storm to welcome him.

He passed on. I had no power to move, but stayed there, clinging to the wall, with my heart cold within me. Down the street there was a fierce shout and an answering curse, as though the fight were being renewed. More voices joined in, doors were unbarred, and footsteps hurried across the cobbles. But I heeded them not : my curiosity was dead. I gathered all my courage, and was about to leave my refuge when other steps were suddenly audible in the street beside me.

This time it was a woman, coming the other way. She was walking with quick, anxious steps, her hand to her forehead, gazing into the darkness with puckered brows. I could see as she passed through the patch of lantern-light that her clothes were gay and brightly coloured, and that both the hand that was raised and that which held up her dress from the mud of the street were sparkling with rings. Her pretty face was very pale beneath the fair clustered ringlets of her hair, though the half-opened lips were unnaturally red. There was fear and apprehension in her expression, and it flashed across my mind that perhaps she had caught a glimpse of that same grim face that had so frightened me a few moments before.

She too went by, and I slipped out of the passage and ran. As I turned the corner I should first have chosen I heard behind me a shrill scream from the woman. She called a man's name, over and over again. Her voice faded behind me as I rushed on, gasping with thankfulness that I had not

to follow that black-bearded man with the tormented eyes, and a few minutes later I was at my mother's door and battering at it to be let in, out of the mysterious terrors of the street.

Next morning the news was running through the town that a young gentleman of Venice had been killed in the street during the night in some quarrel with an officer from the castle. People thought they had quarrelled over a woman of the town, and though I said nothing I thought of the woman I had seen. But long before noon this rumour was outrun all over Cyprus by another tale, how the Moorish general had strangled his wife in her bed that same night, and afterwards slain himself.

THE SEA AND MAN.

*Who, in this mountainous water's heaving power
That shakes the shore with every thunderous wave,
Would guess at the emerald calms that gently lave
These same cliff bases in a summer hour?
And who, when all this sea is like a bower
Of magic peace from tide-lace to the cave
Recessed, could know how it can rise and rave,
Changing to hell-spume from the perfect flower?*

*Even so is Man. Who, seeing his dragonish rage
Lash the whole Earth with wars and tyrannies,
Could think that Christ, Gautama, Socrates
Also were men? Or who, fed from the page
Of poetry's truth, would dream how Hell's vile seas
Could crash upon the world from age to age?*

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS—POET AND PRIEST.

BY IDA FINLAY.

SEVERAL photographs illustrate the three volumes of Gerard Hopkins's correspondence.¹ They show a fine, intellectual head, the eyes and brow serenely sad, and the face stamped with an expression of vulnerable candour. The camera does not contradict a contemporary pen portrait: 'What high serenity, what chastened intellectual power, what firm and resigned purpose, and withal what tranquil sadness or perhaps seriousness, suffusing the features rather than casting a shadow upon them!' To Hopkins the criterion of good literature was being not earnest, but in earnest, and he wears in his face the look of true sincerity, of being in earnest without affectation. What is the truth about this personality concerning whom such contrary things have been said and written?

His legacy to English literature is the slender volume of poems² which Bridges collected in manuscript and published many years after his friend's death. In his lifetime his prosody baffled the few readers of his poems; at times it even puzzled his two admirers, Robert Bridges and Canon R. W. Dixon, and Hopkins laughed outright, but 'very sardonically,' to think of them putting their heads together

¹ Vol. 1. *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. Claud Collier Abbott. Vol. 2. *The Correspondence of G. M. H. and R. W. Dixon*, ed. Claud Collier Abbott. Vol. 3. *Further Letters of G. M. H., including his Correspondence with Coventry Patmore*, ed. Claud Collier Abbott. Oxford Univ. Press.

² *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. with notes by Robt. Bridges; second edition by Charles Williams. Oxford Univ. Press.

and finally being obliged to ask him for a 'crib.' In our day his prosody is admired and imitated, but can a faithless age always reach his thought?

The poems have been supplemented by the letters, now completed with the publication of Professor Abbott's third volume, and a collection from notebooks of sermons and other papers, edited by Humphry House.¹ His life has been briefly outlined by Fr. Lahey, S. J.,² and filled in with extracts from the poems and letters since published. It is the letters which tell us most about the man and form the best background to his Poems. The friendship with Robert Bridges, begun at Oxford, was resumed by correspondence and kept up till the end of his life. The correspondence with Canon Dixon owes its origin to Hopkins's appreciation of the Canon's almost unknown poetry.

We see Gerard Hopkins first as an eager, clever school-boy with a passionate sense of justice. Far from being an aloof day-dreamer he seems to have entered with gusto into the momentous storms-in-a-teacup of the miniature world of school. At times he came into conflict with authority as on the occasion when, in order to prove his theory that people drank more liquid than was good for them, he abstained from all drink until his tongue went black. Among schoolboys, however, it required greater moral courage to brave ridicule and finally to win respect by keeping up his habit of reading a daily passage from the New Testament.

At Balliol he grew up, blossomed and burgeoned, and during the vacation fell so homesick for Oxford that he wrote from his home at Hampstead: 'I always find home so uncivilised . . . and you can only see *The Times* and *Saturday*

¹ *The Notebooks and Papers of G. M. H.*, ed. Humphry House, Oxford Univ. Press.

² *Gerard Manley Hopkins*, by G. F. Lahey, S. J. Oxford Univ. Press.

and nothing else, and the Church is dreary and friends talk of Oxford as if it were Samarkand or Bothnia Felix . . .' He was caught up in the Oxford Movement and, while still at Balliol, converted to the Roman Catholic Church. Two years later he entered the Jesuit novitiate and so turned his back on the prizes of the world which seemed to be his for the asking.

The *Letters* are reticent about his life in the Society, but we have glimpses of him here and there : working in the slums of Liverpool, oppressed by the vice and filth ; happy at St. Beuno's College in Wales where the landscape had a peculiar charm for him—

*Lovely the woods, waters, meadows, combes, vales,
All the air things wear that build this world of Wales . . .*

failing in health and conscientiously struggling with the drudgery of examination work at University College, Dublin, weighing half-marks in the balance with a wet towel round his head at 3 a.m. He died at Dublin, of typhoid fever, in his forty-fifth year.

The first thing which strikes the reader of the letters is the single-hearted purposefulness of the man who wrote them. Whatever he does he does with all his might : all the powers of his intellect are concentrated on the matter which engages his attention for the time being whether it is poetry or music, criticism of his friends' poetry, correcting exam. papers or observing clouds in the sky or waves of the sea. Like a good workman, he does his work in its hour. This quality, the outcome of his natural character combined with his priestly training, made him an excellent critic. 'Patience, hard thing,' lies behind his study of prosody no less than his minute criticism of the poems of Bridges, Dixon and Patmore. No detail is too small for his notice yet he

never loses sight of the perspective of the whole. And poetry, music, the study of nature and the laborious occupations of his calling are all gathered up and subordinated to one single purpose. Behind them the reader is aware of the Ignatian definition of the last end of man : ‘ Man was created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.’

Next to this high aim and the patient care with which it was followed up in detail, the poet’s correspondence reveals a profound loneliness. His circumstances cut him off from a writer’s normal outlet and the letters addressed to the two poets who formed his audience disclose the fact that he was not insensitive to the deprivation.

When Hopkins entered the Jesuit novitiate he burnt all that he had written and for seven years wrote no more. Even then, though at a word from his superior he broke this silence, he wrote to Bridges :

‘ I cannot in conscience spend time on poetry, neither have I the inducements and inspirations that make others compose. Feeling, love in particular, is the great moving power and spring of verse, and the only person that I am in love with seldom, especially now, stirs my heart sensibly, and when he does I cannot always “ make capital of it,” it would be sacrilege to do so.’

Years afterwards, when he came to write *The Testament of Beauty*, Bridges remembered an incident—

‘ when the young poet my companion in study and friend of my heart refused a peach at my hands, he being then a housecarle in Loyola’s menie . . . ’

There were other peaches besides those growing in the garden which Hopkins refused.

By declining to write for publication he refused to snatch at the hope of fame which was his due, and this in spite of

the fact that he urged Bridges and Dixon and all true poets to remember that 'fame, the being known, though in itself one of the most dangerous things to man, is nevertheless the true and appointed air, element and setting of genius and its works . . .' He admitted that what was wanted to make his poetry more intelligible, smoother, and less singular, was an audience, and he allowed that he wished his poems could at some time become known, but in some spontaneous way and without his forcing it himself. The wish was not to be fulfilled in his lifetime.

'Life is a short blanket—profoundest of homely sayings,' he wrote, 'great gifts and great opportunities are more than life spares to one man. It is much if we get something, a spell, an innings at all. See how the great conquerors were cut short, Alexander, Cæsar. Above all Christ our Lord : his career was cut short and, whereas he would have wished to succeed by success—for it is insane to lay yourself out for failure, prudence is the first of the cardinal virtues, and he was the most prudent of men—nevertheless he was doomed to succeed by failure ; his plans were baffled, his hopes dashed, and his work was done by being broken off undone. However much he understood all this he found it an intolerable grief to submit to it. He left the example : it is very strengthening, but except in that sense it is not consoling.'

He speaks also of the want of intellectual stimulus in his life. 'I sadly need that, and a general stimulus to being, so dull and yet harassed is my life.'

Fame then, and intellectual stimulus, were sacrificed to his religious vocation, but though his sensitive nature suffered from this there was never any doubt in his mind as to the relative importance of the religious and poetic demands. He puts the matter plainly and with humility in a letter to Dixon :

‘My vocation puts before me a standard so high that a higher can be found nowhere else. The question then for me is not whether I am willing (if I may guess what is in your mind) to make a sacrifice of hopes of fame (let us suppose) but whether I am not to undergo a severe judgment from God for the lothness I have shown in making it, for the reserves I may have in my heart made, for the backward glances I have given with my hand on the plough, for the waste of time the very compositions you admire may have caused and their preoccupation of the mind which belonged to more sacred or more binding duties, for the disquiet and the thoughts of vainglory they have given rise to. A purpose may look smooth and perfect from without but be frayed and faltering from within. I have never wavered in my vocation, but I have not lived up to it.’

Having denied himself and followed Christ—‘the only just judge, the only just literary critic . . . who prizes, is proud of, and admires, more than any man, more than the receiver himself can, the gifts of his own making’—he was content to leave what he had written to God’s providence.

On one hand cut off from the congenial surroundings he had known at Oxford, on the other he had to bear the sorrow of his friends’ lack of sympathy with his religion. With the exception of Patmore (with whom he became acquainted only towards the end of his life) those who shared his perceptions did not share his belief.

‘You say you do not like Jesuits,’ he wrote to Bridges, ‘Did you ever see one?’ He knew the letters S.J. acted as rubric and his dearest friend was not immune from the spell.

We can guess from the one-sided correspondence (Bridges’ letters have not been kept) that Hopkins made tentative efforts to convert his friend. When Bridges went to hear

him preach, Hopkins regretted (on a post card) that he had not learnt his sermon better, was glad that Bridges did not like the music and sorry that he did not like the Mass. On another occasion we see the young priest with an anxious eye on his friend during a Corpus Christi procession, grieving that he had not been given a book to follow the words sung so that the beautiful hymns of St. Thomas might give meaning to the music and the rite. In vain, it seems, he wrote to him afterwards to explain the significance of the most purely joyous of solemnities. He desired to see his friend 'a Catholic or, if not that, a Christian or, if not that, at least a believer in the true God.' Being doubtful of his views on the deity, he urged him to give alms for charity's sake on the principle that alms redeem sins and will not let the soul go out into darkness, but Bridges misunderstood and was vexed, and called forth a second letter on the subject in which Hopkins begged him not to confuse the practice of almsgiving with the wearing of hairshirts.

Bridges could not resist an expression of approval when Addis, a mutual friend, left the Roman Catholic Church. 'But why should you be glad?' cried Gerard. 'Why at any rate should you burst upon me that you are glad, when you know that I cannot be glad? It seems there is something in you interposed between, what shall we say, the Christian and the man of the world, which hurts, which is to me like biting on a cinder in bread.'

The cinders cropped up fairly often. Bridges would not accept Hopkins's 'Prayer for Protestants,' written by request for an anthology, because it was too dogmatic. The letter which follows stresses certain fundamental differences between them. To Bridges a religious mystery meant an interesting uncertainty, and the interest lay in the uncertainty; to Hopkins it meant an incomprehensible certainty,

and this was the very ecstasy of interest. To Bridges dogma was, as to many, 'the dull algebra of the schoolmen'; to Hopkins it was news of all he held most intimate and dear.

To the last, when he came to edit the *Poems*, Bridges maintained that his friend sometimes forced emotion into theological channels, as if he could not believe that this was spontaneous and sincere. Nevertheless no handsomer tribute has been paid than the poem written in dedication of the First Edition to the fact that Hopkins's religion was not a hypothesis but a life.

The same orthodox spirit rendered Greek mythology a frigid and unworkable material for Hopkins and made him grieve that even the good Canon Dixon was capable of writing a 'heathenish' poem. He had, however, nothing of the narrow sectarian about him. Patmore wrote of him :

'Gerard Hopkins was the only orthodox, and as far as I could see, saintly man in whom religion had absolutely no narrowing effect upon his general opinions and sympathies. A Catholic of the most scrupulous strictness, he could nevertheless see the Holy Spirit in all goodness, truth and beauty; and there was something in all his words and manners which was at once a rebuke and an attraction to all who could only aspire to be like him.'

In spite of the rift between them caused by the difference in religion, it is clear that Hopkins warmed to the genius and character of Bridges' poetry. 'If I were not your friend,' he wrote to him, 'I would wish to be the friend of the man who wrote your poems. They show the eye for pure beauty and they show, my dearest, besides, the character which is so much more precious.' Hopkins never flatters, but the letters are scattered with acknowledgments such as these. 'Your precious little volume is to hand—

also to head and heart, breathing genius everywhere, like sweetherbs . . .’—‘Besides the feeling richness of phrase in so many places, the sequence in it, and the constant music, it does me good, the freshness and buoyancy and independence I find in your poems, marked with character throughout and human nature.’

He considered a true humanity the most precious of all qualities in style, and this he prized in the poems of both Bridges and Dixon. He recognised the feeling for the tragedy that is kneaded up in human life which Dixon’s writing displays, and Dixon on his part found Hopkins’s poems unmatched ‘in the power of forcibly and delicately giving the essence of things in nature, and of carrying one out of oneself with healing.’

With Patmore the relationship was different. Here there was no religious cleavage, but the older poet, in spite of a high regard for Hopkins’s character and respect for his judgment, could make nothing of his poetry, a fact which appeared to trouble him more than it troubled Hopkins. Their friendship, Professor Abbott points out, in a sense came too late, when Patmore was growing old and set in his ways. Yet ‘though Patmore failed to understand the worth of the poet, no one discerned more clearly or stated more emphatically what was, for Hopkins, his crown of endeavour, the prevailing goodness of the priest.’

There is something touching about the complete submission of the older poet who was, as a rule, far from being a docile character, to the searching criticism of the younger. It is true that Patmore had himself invited this criticism ; yet he can scarcely have expected it to prove so detailed or to probe so deep. Hopkins regarded Patmore as a master of phrase, he admired his insight and his imagery, though at times it seemed to him that the feeling did not flush the

language, resulting in a lack of fusion which is never absent in Hopkins's own poetry. As regards the matter of Patmore's poetry, his critic was unhappy when he tolerated vanity in women, a fault which made Shakespeare's Beatrice almost a hideous character for Hopkins, as modesty made Desdemona beautiful; and he confessed himself ill at ease when a certain jesting humour crept into Patmore's treatment of the profoundly delicate matter of divine love. Elsewhere he took him to task for writing on a philosophical matter without philosophic precision. 'Paradox persisted in is not the plain truth and ought not to satisfy the reader.' This was not mere carping. It was a labour of love to read and criticise so carefully and his subtle fault-finding, Patmore said, was the greatest praise his poetry had ever received.

Of the three volumes of *Correspondence*, the first, which contains the letters to Bridges, is the most intimate and therefore the most interesting, but all three bear the stamp of the same unique character and help to a better understanding of the poet. The remaining letters include a number to Mowbray Baillie, a rationalistic friend who nevertheless felt the attraction of the 'irrational,' and who after Hopkins's death paid him the compliment of saying that one of his greatest regrets in no longer believing in a second life was that he wanted so badly 'somewhere, somehow, to meet Gerard Hopkins again.'

Two legends have arisen round the figure of Hopkins. The first is that his poems were not appreciated by his Victorian contemporaries and it rests with our more enlightened age to rescue him from oblivion. It is true that his sprung rhythm in a sense anticipated the *tempo* of our day, though he himself traced it back in English literature to the choruses of Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. It is however unfair to say that he was not recognised by his contemporaries. To begin

with, very few of them had the chance of reading him, since of his own choice he did not write for publication. Of those who did read him and were competent to judge, Robert Bridges and Canon Dixon rated him very highly. It is true that Patmore only suspected excellence—‘veins of pure gold embedded in masses of impracticable quartz,’ but his admiration for the essential *quality* of the poet is at least as true an appreciation as the imitation of externals. Imitators should bear in mind the following passage from a letter to Bridges :

‘I sent you a sonnet, on the Heraclitean Fire, in which a great deal of early Greek philosophical thought was distilled ; but the liquor of the distillation did not taste very Greek, did it ? The effect of studying masterpieces is to make me admire and do otherwise . . . So it must be on every original artist to some degree . . .’

Hopkins’s prosody grew out of his thought. First, the inspiration ; next, the development into a finished poem ; last, the discovery and definition of inherent rules.

The second legend, which dates from longer ago but still persists, concerns the slow martyrdom of Hopkins, as a poet and a man, in the Order to which he belonged. No one has put this point of view more emphatically than C. N. Luxmoore in a letter to Arthur Hopkins written after Gerard’s death.

‘Humanly speaking,’ he writes, ‘he made a grievous mistake in joining the Jesuits, for on further acquaintance his whole soul must have revolted against a system which has killed many and many a noble soul ; but what matters the means compared with the undoubted result ? Any wood will do for the cross, when God’s perfection is thereby reached. To get on with the Jesuits you must become on many grave points a machine, without will, without conscience, and that to his nature was an impossibility.

To his lasting honour be it said he was too good for them . . .’

In the *Life*, Father Lahey, S.J., hotly denies the tragic portraits which have been drawn of an Englishman exiled in Dublin, slowly dying of loneliness, drudgery and despair. ‘Nothing,’ he says, ‘could be more foreign to the sincere and candid accounts of those who lived with him.’ The *Letters*, however, and some of the later sonnets, show us that he did in fact suffer from loneliness and drudgery, and at times came near despair. Another Jesuit Father writes in a *Page of Irish History*, quoted in a note to the first volume of the *Letters* :

‘It has been alleged that he ought never to have been a Jesuit ; but his love for his Order was intense, and we are permitted to believe that, though he had many trials to endure, they were mainly due to his highly-wrought temperament. If this be so, it is probable that in other circumstances he would not have had a brighter existence, and perhaps would have been deprived of the deepest consolations of his life.’

There is probably more justice in these remarks than in either of the extreme points of view quoted above. The religious vocation, which to his literary friends seemed to limit and thwart his genius, yet trained and disciplined his mind on lines which led to its most characteristic expression.

BAPTISM OF WAR.

BY LEO KAINRADL.

It is a fortunate gift of human nature that one can quickly forget bad times once they are past. Thus, while the grim pictures of war have almost vanished from my mind and return but seldom like the pale shadows of some bad dream, I can still recall many cheerful and vivid memories of good comradeship and the humours of campaigning as clearly as if they had happened only yesterday. And perhaps a small incident of a remarkable nature may here be rescued from oblivion as worthy of record.

It was in late autumn of 1917, after the break through at Caporetto, when the Austrian troops were approaching the Piave without opposition. After a few slight skirmishes with the enemy rearguard, our regiment was now taking a short rest in Ponte nelle Alpi, a charming place set in the midst of orchards where the fruit still hung in plenty. Among the rich booty of recent fighting there were several officers' chargers, to be shared between the battalion and company commanders. A small pedigree grey with a dark head fell to my lot. We christened him Othello, and decided to try him out at once. So three of us—Captain Reinisch, the Adjutant, and myself—trotted briskly out into the country-side, in the peaceful autumn sunshine. Before long we caught sight of a group of cottages, dominated by a tall building not unlike a castle within a high, square boundary-wall. At the entrance-gate was a crowd of noisy soldiers, clamouring for admittance from a solitary woman and defying her attempts to turn them away.

The senior officer of our party, Captain Reinisch, charged up to them, restored order with a sharp word of command and sent the marauders off to their neighbouring bivouac. The frightened woman overwhelmed us with thanks, and explained that these tough customers (they were Bosnian infantry) had wanted to force an entrance into the building in search of comfortable quarters. The house, she told us, was a mental home, and in any case it was crammed with patients ; the doctors and almost all the nursing staff had fled in panic, leaving her and a few devoted maids to shoulder the whole weight of nursing. To convince us of the truth of her words, she gave us a warm invitation to see over the home.

She was a tall woman and in her day must have been very beautiful. She addressed us in broken German, while our Italian was perhaps even more halting ; but we managed to understand each other, and her frankness won our immediate sympathy. We accepted her invitation at once.

We made our way through the large silent garden, where the last asters and dahlias were still in bloom, and tied our horses to the railing of a fountain. A broad stone staircase led into the house and to the spacious wards. Everything was spotlessly clean and tidy. There were wards for men and women. The patients stared at us with the sad vision of a distorted brain. Among the men were a few sick soldiers partly in uniform, and we were met by black looks as their clouded minds recognised the enemy ; but the firm, quiet tone and glance of our companion kept them in check, and we passed through each ward without disturbance.

Just as we were taking our leave, the Padrona said to me : ' We have a German woman in the house, not a patient, but a young mother. She was chased out of her home in panic just before her time came and took refuge with us. Now

her child has been born. Perhaps you would like to talk to her? She comes from Tyrol, from Cortina, I believe, where she was married to an Italian. Unfortunately, the husband has been missing for some months, presumably taken prisoner or maybe killed.' Our sympathies were roused for this poor woman and we asked to see her.

We found the young mother lying in bed in a small, bright room, with a healthy baby beside her. It was not long before we heard further details of what the matron had already told us. To my surprise, I discovered that she was the sister of an Ampezzo guide, who had been my companion some years before in the Dolomites. It was a tragic story which she told me, all the more tragic from her uncertainty about the fate of her husband and her own forlorn condition. But what oppressed her most was the thought that in this mad-house her child would have no chance of a Christian baptism, for the local priest had fled together with the medical staff. Not a day went by, she said with tears, that she did not pray that God might work a miracle and send a priest to baptise her child.

'This miracle, dear lady,' said Captain Reinisch, 'shall happen now. We will get your baby baptised immediately, and I and my friend here will be the godfathers. Our Adjutant shall ride straight back to the regiment and bring the chaplain along. Please get everything ready for the service!'

Barely half an hour later the Adjutant and the Chaplain came galloping up. In the meantime, the maids had quickly decked out the room in the most charming fashion, with a beautiful crucifix and flowers in pots and vases. But at this moment the matron took me aside and asked me anxiously whether this was not a practical joke. Here was a man in service uniform and cap; was he really a genuine priest, or

merely another of our officers? I told her that she need not be troubled, for she would soon see the genuineness of his orders. I may mention that the Austrian field-chaplains always took with them a serviceable travelling-case containing their robes and Church vessels, and this case could also be opened out to serve as an altar.

Meanwhile the chaplain had changed into his clerical robes and now entered the small room where we were all waiting for him. The maids sank to their knees in deep reverence, and a voice murmured: 'Che bell' uomo!' Yes, our chaplain was indeed as handsome as Apollo. Alas, he was soon to fall a victim to the war.

And now the baptismal rite was performed with due solemnity. Captain Reinisch and I held the baby in turns, and with the sprinkling of water and the joyful tears of a delighted mother a small Christian was brought into being. The priest drew up a proper baptismal certificate in Latin, which was witnessed by us two proud godfathers. Before we left, a sergeant from the field-bakery close by arrived with a loaf of the exact size and weight of the baby. We laid this chivalrous gift with a small sum of money beside the small Alois (for this was the name chosen by his mother), and to the accompaniment of thanks and blessings we left that house of gloom, where now a ray of purest happiness had entered in.

Two years later I heard from friends in Trento that our godchild and his mother were both flourishing—a welcome sequel to this strange baptism of war.

Munich.

CHILDREN OF THE RECTORY.

BY KATHLEEN COLLISON-MORLEY.

I.

THE Reverend John Wood brought his young wife to the parish in June. This, his first cure of souls, lay in a remote county, encompassed by hills. All day they had driven further and further west, into the heart of a green silence. Finally, they left the main road and plunged into a maze of lanes. Over the broad banks, crowned with flowers, they caught a glimpse of steep little fields where swathes of mown hay pervaded the air with sweetness, and young corn brimmed hedge-high. The car sheared its way through twin waves of fools' parsley that foamed in their wake. Already the hanging woods brooded in a blue hush of midsummer. Everywhere was luxuriant growth, and tranquillity; greenery so lush and brilliant that it resembled a medieval illumination; a peace so profound that it might have emanated from the rapt landscape of a dream. At the cross-roads, where moor and valley met, they halted.

'There is your new home,' he said.

Cecilia looked across a tumbled foreground to the church tower soaring between cypresses. Thatched cottages huddled like a flock of sheep round the gables which marked their pastor's house. It stood in a snug glebe. The rounded crests of oaks and one glistening copper-beech tree marked the garden.

‘How lovely,’ she murmured, ‘and how quiet ! It looks like something remembered in old age.’

‘This is the parish boundary,’ said her husband briskly, memorising the appearance of ditches, road-metal and telegraph poles so that he could start on well-informed terms with the rural district council. ‘There used to be a chapel here, those humps of turf are the foundations. It was built to keep the dragons and unquiet spirits of the moor at bay. They say that it is still haunted by the ghost of a wild boar.’

Flies hummed amidst the bracken fringing the tilled land. Wind-warped trees cast a flickering shade. The grass was as fine and close-cropped as velvet. Cecilia, moved by one of the impulses which she had resolved to suppress in future, leaned sideways to kiss him. He looked so young and brown and ardent. It was hard to think that they might both grow old there.

‘It proves that the power of the church is waning,’ she said. ‘You’ll probably find yourself laying ghosts and ducking witches before you know where you are. I don’t suppose they’ve even *heard* of the Women’s Institute here.’

‘Then you will have to inaugurate it, darling. You’d enjoy being a pioneer.’

Their eyes kindled at each other’s glance, for they had not been married long. Then Cecilia grew grave. ‘Oh, John, promise me to remain like this. Don’t ever become pompous. I simply couldn’t bear it if you took to intoning your responses at me. It’s a frightful responsibility to marry a parson.’

‘I hope you won’t find it too much for you. There’s the parish visiting, and the Mothers’ Meetings, and teaching the Sunday school.’

‘Besides keeping you human.’

His resolute face softened. ‘You’ll have no difficulty in

that. Do you realise that I am also Lord of the Manor ? Isn't it a joke ? It is a perquisite dating back to the thirteenth century, I believe. One imagines that, in the old days, these incumbents lived like country gentlemen. It is a fairly rich living, as you know.'

'Thank goodness, or we could not have been married for years.'

'Yes, I hardly dared hope for such luck, and I mean to work hard here. No slacking just because it's an easy billet. Although the population is so sparse, there's a lot to do. The last rector was fearfully slipshod, drank himself to death, they say.'

'One should not listen to village gossip,' said Cecilia primly. 'How dull it would be if one didn't. Oh, John, I must remember all my good resolutions about being dignified and discreet and rather awe-inspiring ! Do you think I shall succeed as a parson's wife ?'

'Goose,' he said. 'I want to prepare you for the rather primitive conditions of the Rectory. I've had the carpenter in, and the place whitewashed and scrubbed. You won't discover any rotten floors or damp ceilings ; but I couldn't afford to do much. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners only pay half the expenses, you know. There are no modern amenities.'

'And no modern horrors, like hideous little villas and chain stores,' Cecilia added contentedly.

'No main water, but the well is a good one. I've had it tested for purity. No electricity. We'll have to live by lamp and candlelight.'

'So peaceful and romantic.'

'But tiresome, remember. Lamps take an age to clean and fill. I must break it gently to you, darling, but there's actually a geyser in the bathroom.'

Cecilia uttered a little shriek, reflecting that this was possibly her last chance of irresponsibility. She meant to be a pattern of stern common-sense henceforward. 'How terrifying ! Does it look kind ? I always think you can tell a lot from the expression ; efficient but temperamental, rusty but harmless, or frankly intimidating. Do you think I can find some kind woman to teach me its ways ?'

'I've engaged Mrs. Rugg, the sexton's wife, as a daily cook. She's kind enough, I should say. A most cheerful and motherly body, I thought her. He's also the carpenter. His family has lived here time out of mind. I got all my local information from him. He talks of my only notable predecessor as though he were still alive.'

'When did he live ?'

'In the time of the Civil War. He was a fine preacher. Rugg showed me an old book of his sermons. He was also a man of action. He raised a troop of Royalist Horse in the parish, and went into exile with Charles II. He died here after the Restoration. Rugg wants me to repair his monument. Its shockingly neglected, like everything else. Young Rugg has been working manfully in the garden, darling, but I hardly like you to see it yet. It was a wilderness. Everything grows so fast here that, once you let a place go, it becomes a jungle in no time. Well, we must drive on. I told them to expect us for tea. Mrs. Rugg is providing a girl from the village to be trained as housemaid. A mere child, she is, but seems willing.'

Cecilia wondered if it could be her whom she heard sobbing as they skirted the high Rectory wall. Somewhere in the woodland behind it, a child was crying. The faint desolate wail struck an alien note in that rural symphony of birdsong and lowing cattle. Surely it was quite a small child, much younger than the leaving-school age ? No

doubt it had strayed into the Rectory garden from one of the cottages. If the place had been neglected lately, all sorts of little invaders, foxes and children and rabbits, might have crept into the grounds. Elated as she was, the sound haunted her as they swung through the gate and saw the Rectory.

It stood in a cup of rising meadowland, as green and smooth as a piece of Wedgwood ware. It was built of red sandstone; the front Victorian-Gothic, the kitchen quarters Tudor. Uniformity of material gave it a certain air of compactness. It glowed cosily, among lawns freshly-scythed and shrubberies newly-lopped. Stumps showed where John had felled trees in order to do justice to the magnificent copper-beech screening the church. Sunlight poured into its open windows, on to the weedy gravel, over the mossed roofs. The whole scene, steeped in golden light and silence, was as tranquil as doom.

‘What a kind little house!’ Cecilia exclaimed. ‘It looks as though it had always been happy.’

That night, when she wandered round the moonlit garden, she heard children crying again.

II.

On their first Sunday, Cecilia heard her husband read himself into his new parish. The fine weather continued. Under such halcyon skies, amid such radiant greenery, the world appeared newly created. The red soil nourished a rampant vegetation unknown to the austerer quarters of England. Its growth was almost sub-tropical. She loitered in the walled garden after morning service, with the warmth penetrating to her very bones, for she was chilled by the damp church. She thought that the Rectory might have been empty for years instead of months. As yet,

young Rugg had scarcely tamed the wilderness with his axe and hoe. Unpruned peach-trees straggled against the mellow walls. Bindweed throttled the gooseberries and currants. Early raspberries were ripening on canes so choked with groundsel that they were screened from thieving birds ; but not from other raiders, apparently. She noticed a whisk of ragged skirts in their midst.

‘Hullo,’ she called. ‘Who are you?’

The movement ceased, as though petrified with the fear that all wild creatures know. Two little girls, brown and lean like gypsies, peered at her warily. There was a watchful silence.

‘Us bain’t doing no harm,’ said the elder at length, defiantly. Although she spoke with a soft west-country tongue, her voice had the inflections of breeding.

‘Mary won’t let us steal,’ piped the younger, whose scratched legs were bandy from too much walking. ‘Taking berries bain’t stealing. Nobody picks them ’cept the birds. We’m hungry.’

Cecilia smiled. ‘When I was small I was always hungry, especially before dinner.’

‘Us won’t have no dinner.’

She stared at them, shocked. The parish had seemed poor, being entirely agricultural, but not needy. She and John were agreeably surprised at conditions. Thanks to a scrupulous landlord, the villagers were adequately housed. Each cottage possessed a thriving garden. The farmers allowed their men skim milk and firing. The school-children looked healthy. Yet these little girls were pitiable thin and furtive. Their poise came from proficiency in dodging blows. Cecilia was familiar with that hardy wretchedness ; she had worked in the East End before she married John. Surely they could belong to no cottagers in that neighbourhood ?

They might be the children of the itinerant clog-makers who camped in the alderwood beyond the mill.

‘Are you gypsies?’ she asked.

They shrank from her. Their berry-smeared faces contracted in a spasm of fear. ‘No, we’re not vagrants. Don’t set the dogs on we. Please not to call the dogs.’

‘I wouldn’t dream of doing such a thing,’ she said, noticing their local misuse of pronouns. ‘I’ve got no dogs, except a tiny puppy. You’d love him. He is very playful. You can eat as many berries as you want, then I’m going to take you into the house and give you a good meal. There’s roast beef and gooseberry-tart. Do you like gooseberry-tart?’

They glanced at each other, half-eager and half-suspicious.

‘Mrs. Rugg makes awfully good pastry,’ Cecilia added persuasively.

‘Mary wouldn’t like us to go indoors,’ said the elder. ‘She’d say it was begging. She won’t let us beg.’

‘Who is Mary?’

They answered in chorus.

‘She’s our sister.’

‘She looks after we. She has gone to ask the old men to give us some food.’

‘That’s not begging ’cos it’s our due.’

‘We’re hungry,’ explained the baby wistfully.

‘Where is your father?’ Cecilia asked.

‘He’s in the army, with our brothers, serving the King.’

‘Little brother is in there,’ said the baby, pointing to the rose-tangled churchyard.

‘And your mother?’

‘She’s dead,’ they said.

Cecilia regretted her curiosity. She would have to tackle John about this really dreadful case of neglect, as soon

as he had finished discussing church-renovation with old Rugg in the vestry.

'Come with me and we'll find Mrs. Rugg,' she said. 'Dinner must be nearly ready.'

She thrust open the garden-door which hung drunkenly on rusty hinges. It gave on to an overgrown shrubbery. The laurels were the oldest she had ever seen, gaunt and black and uncanny. Their leaves shone like dark metal. Nothing grew in their shade. They framed a telescopic view of the Rectory, the brighter by contrast, dreaming among its sun-drenched lawns. She heard the children pattering behind; their bare feet skipped with the pathetic irresponsibility of youth, however unhappy. Once on the drive, John's firm rapid stride overtook hers. She halted to greet him.

'I'm going to feed some of your lambs,' she confided, unable, once they were together, to believe that anything, even cruelty to children, was so terrible as it had seemed in his absence.

He tucked her hand under his arm. 'There you go, collecting livestock already,' he said gaily. 'First the puppy, because you thought the tinker was not kind to it. Now lambs. What has their owner been doing to them?'

'Neglecting them, John.'

'Shameful, but you'll have some farmer prosecuting you, my dear. Sheep-stealing is a serious offence. Men have been hanged for less.'

'I'm serious, darling. I mean these stray children. I found them in the walled garden. They were eating raspberries. They seem to be starving. I thought you'd be able to investigate their case. They are alone in the world. Oh, isn't cruelty dreadful? It makes me feel quite sick.'

He looked at her gravely. 'I see no children,' he said. When she turned round, neither could she.

III.

Cecilia, gauntleted and gum-booted, was clearing weeds from the neighbourhood of the copper-beech. There was something about nettles, she considered, which spelled the last word in neglect. They affronted her sight every morning when she gazed, enraptured, over the dewy garden. At night, while escorting the puppy on his last walk, they invariably stung her ankles. John being absent on a visit to the moorland farms, and young Rugg busy among the vegetables, she had tackled the job. She knew that both men would consider it beneath the dignity of a parson's lady. She only hoped that no callers would surprise her. A rustle in the willows made her straighten guiltily. It was the fox-terrier puppy, pouncing in mimic fury beside the stream. At her call, a tousled head rose apprehensively among the forget-me-nots. There were the children, three of them, so presumably Mary had returned from her mission.

'Hullo,' said Cecilia, assuming that they were old friends by this time. 'I'm sorry you had to run away the other day. Don't go now. I'd like somebody to talk to me. I'm tired. I've been working very hard.'

They faced her across the trickle of ale-brown water that tasted of the peat whence it had sprung. Evidently they had been drinking. The baby's peaked little face was dripping. Mary, recognisable by her air of resolution and her height (she must have been at least twelve years of age), held a sopping rag in one hand. She was the most ragged of the trio, but the cleanest. Cecilia fondled the puppy.

'Don't be frightened of him. He only wants to play.'

'We used to play here, before you came,' said Mary accusingly.

'Oh ah, we played house under the tree. Our brothers climbed it.'

Mary turned on her sister. 'Susan, ye're not to say "Oh ah." It's common.'

'Sorry, Mary.'

'I heard somebody crying again last night,' Cecilia continued conversationally. 'Was it you?'

The youngest child nodded.

'She has lost her rag-baby,' Mary explained.

'We've a-searched for un,' said Susan, whose dialect defied both her own and Mary's efforts to correct it.

'How very sad. Do you think it might be among these nettles? I'll have a look. Leave it to me, you'd only get stung.'

With her shining rubber boots, Cecilia swished back and forth. Old tins came to light and a broken crock, but no doll. She was much impeded by the puppy, who kept sheltering under her skirts. His hackles lifted, and his milk-teeth bared in a perpetual snarl. He seemed to be terrified of the children. They watched him gravely, wary as he. Then Mary moved off and spread her rag to dry upon a pollard willow. It was the baby's shift. She worked with as much solemnity as if she had been playing at dolls. She reminded Cecilia of the prematurely-aged little mothers of the slums.

The others squatted in the rank wet herbage and began to gather a posy. Evidently nature had intended Susan to be plump. Her small wrists were still encircled with bracelets of baby fat, but her cheeks were as hollow as her sisters'. She was the most timorous, starting at sudden movements and shrinking from the puppy. Under happier circumstances, she would have been the gayest member of the family, being the communicative one. The black-eyed baby was the least untidy. She wore a full-skirted frock with a creased lawn collar, and her curls were free of tangles.

Weather and wear had faded all the children's clothes to an inconspicuous drabness.

'I'm afraid there's no doll here,' said Cecilia, after an exhaustive search. 'I wonder where it could be. Do you remember leaving it anywhere?'

'It is in the nursery,' Mary said. 'I keep telling her that we hid it in the cupboard before we left, but she won't believe me. She wants to go and fetch it. We can't make her understand. She does not seem to mind anything else, only losing her rag-baby. She can't go to sleep without it. She is only a baby, you see.'

Cecilia saw, only too well. 'Which room do you call the nursery?'

'Your room. We saw you leaning from the window one night, and brushing your hair by lamplight. We can see quite plain from the garden, before you draw the curtains.'

'Our mother used to brush her hair o' nights,' Susan interposed, with her fists full of forget-me-nots. 'It was like yours, only longer.'

'She made us keep our toys in the cupboard under the nursery window-seat,' Mary pursued, charmed into sudden garrulity by the recollection. 'We had to tidy them away before bedtime. There were bricks with letters on 'em, and a card game, and the hornbook . . .'

'That was no plaything,' Susan objected.

' . . . And our brothers' old hobby-horse. His paint was mighty worn, but he had a long mane. I used to comb it. I was only little then, of course.'

'Of course. Did your brothers play with you?'

'They were too big. William was grown up, and Henry went to Oxford. He was sent down by the Parliament. Frank used to give us rides on his back, he was always laughing. Tony had lessons with Father. He was monstrous

grand, learning Greek and Latin and mather—matter—mattermatics . . .’

‘I can plait straw mats,’ said the baby, catching the last word. ‘Mother showed me how.’

‘She taught me to make clay birds and beasts for Anne,’ said Susan proudly.

‘Who is Anne?’

‘She was our sister.’

‘She’s dead,’ said the wistful baby.

‘Drowned in the sea with Mother and Nanna.’

‘Be quiet!’ cried Mary fiercely. ‘I’ve told you not to talk about that.’

Susan sprang to her feet, convulsed with alarm. ‘Hark, there’s somebody a-coming!’

‘It’s only my husband,’ said Cecilia soothingly. ‘He’s rather nice. He likes children.’

‘I like him,’ the baby piped. ‘He looks a kind man, Mr. Rugg is a kind man. He made me a boat once. We all sailed it on the pond. It has gone now.’

‘The pond has gone, too. It used to be here, you can still see the shape, but the old man drained it.’

‘He was a bad man,’ said the baby.

‘He took our father’s place, and set the dogs on us when we came back.’

Cecilia heard the screech of brakes as John halted his car in the stableyard. Then he shoved open the grating coach-house doors, and one banged to again, being ramshackle like all the outbuildings. ‘I must run and help him,’ she said. ‘Don’t go.’

But they had gone when John returned with her sickle, to finish reaping the nettles.

IV.

One evening of autumn Cecilia sat beside the parlour window, listening to the portable wireless which had been a wedding-present, and dreaming of the newcomer for whom she was knitting a minute vest. The damp lawns steamed in the dusk. An old-fashioned rose-bush swung its heavy blooms like censers against the wall. The church tower loomed benignly against a sky of clearest apple-green. In that dim hour, the brooding tranquillity characteristic of the Rectory garden was intensified. Soil and sod exhaled sweetness. The copper-beech glowed in a shaft of lamp-light ; its low branches as sharply-defined as stage scenery. The whole landscape looked unreal, melting and changing with the ebbing day. The disembodied music enhanced Cecilia's mood. She felt detached, alone in a world of shadows ; for John was absent at a parish meeting, and the housemaid partnering Mrs. Rugg at a whist-drive.

Her thoughts were all of John ; his keenness and capability, his triumphant knack of friendship, the happiness that he drew from her, his vitality. The kind old house would make an ideal birthplace for his child who lay, increasingly heavy, beneath her heart. So many children had been born there.

Her meditation was interrupted by a suave voice announcing the weekly commentary on world affairs. Cecilia felt them to be too remote from her own charmed circle of suspense. She turned the switch. In the ensuing silence she heard again the faint desolate sobbing that often broke her rest. She flung open a window.

'Mary, Susan, what is it ?' she shouted. 'Come here.'

The shadows moved. Two children materialised from them, the lamplight blanching their sunburnt faces.

'It's Cecill, she won't go to sleep,' Mary explained.

‘Where is she?’

‘In the barn. We made her a bed of hay. It is very wet in the garden to-night.’

‘Us bain’t doing no harm,’ said Susan nervously. ‘The old man let us bide.’

‘Don’t speak so broad, Susan. He was too blind, he didn’t see us. Not after that first time when he caught us in the house, and set on his dogs. I keep telling Cecill we must never go there again. They were big dogs.’

Susan shuddered.

‘The puppy has gone out with my husband,’ said Cecilia. She rummaged in her work-basket. ‘Here is something for you. I looked under my bedroom window-seat the other day. You were quite right. There is a cupboard, but it had been papered over. When I opened it I found a lot of dust and cobwebs and, right at the back, this.’

She held out a rag-doll, faded beyond resemblance to anything human, but dressed in a bright woollen frock and cap. There was a silence.

‘I made her some new clothes,’ she added, fearing that, according to the curious ideas of childhood, she had destroyed its charm. ‘I thought she might feel cold in the garden, after staying indoors for so long.’

Mary darted away, still speechless. Susan began to whimper. In a moment her two sisters returned. The baby was blinking and flushed with tears, her hair stuck full of hay. She held out her small grubby hands.

‘You are kind, kind,’ she cried. ‘Oh, Mary, she’s found at last!’

‘Now you won’t sob any more o’ nights,’ said Susan.

‘Thank her, Cecill. I’m for ever telling you to mind your manners. She is only half awake, you see,’ said Mary apologetically.

The window slammed in a sudden draught as John entered the parlour. His presence always seemed to bring a breeze. He bent to kiss her, smelling of heather and tobacco. Cecilia found herself blinking, as Cecill had done.

‘Tired, darling?’ he asked with his new solicitude. ‘I’ve got something interesting to tell you.’

‘So have I. I’ve been talking to the children again.’

John filled his pipe. ‘Curious that I never see them. They seem to haunt the place.’

‘Yes, they’ve gone now. They are frightened of you, all except the baby. She thinks you are kind.’

‘Am I?’

‘The kindest husband in the world. Dearest, isn’t it odd that her name should be the same as mine? The others call her Cecill. A diminutive, I suppose. We’re quite good friends now. They were very pleased with the doll.’

‘A most insanitary toy, I should have thought. Now, look what I have discovered.’

Enthusiastically he unwrapped the parcel he was carrying. It exhaled the musty odour of age, like that of the doll which Cecilia had just restored to its rightful owners. It was a book, bound in moth-eaten leather. Its pages were stained and tattered. A fine nervous penmanship here emerged, and there vanished into blots.

‘You’ll have to get this re-bound and mounted on silk,’ said Cecilia, poring over it. ‘I can hardly read a word.’

‘Rugg and I have been deciphering it. He is fearfully excited. He found it in the belfry when he was clearing out. It must have been there for years, thrown down in a corner. He thinks that his own ancestor probably wrote the first entries. There is a tradition that his family have always been sextons and churchwardens here. It gives one a great sense of continuity to come to a place like this, I must say.’

'The past seems to be living beside us,' Cecilia murmured.

'Do you feel that, too? Look, the records begin in 1622. There's a mention of Dr. Byam's induction; he succeeded his father in the living, Rugg says. He married the daughter of a neighbouring parson, Mary Fleete, and they had ten children. Here's the register of their christenings; William, Henry, Francis, Anthony, then two sons who died in infancy, Mary, Susan, Anne and Cecill.'

Cecilia put a hand to her heart. 'Cecill!' she repeated faintly.

'Yes, she was the youngest. Anne was "drowned in the midst of the sea," as it says over here. The ink has faded, but Rugg knows the story. Apparently, when Dr. Byam raised a troop of loyal horse, it included his four eldest sons . . .'

' . . . So that was why Henry was sent down from Oxford by the Parliament.'

John was too engrossed with his discoveries to heed her. 'Well, I suppose that all the remaining villagers were hostile, so Mrs. Byam fled with her nurse and children to Wales. The ship foundered, and she was drowned . . .'

'Poor woman. She had hair like mine, only longer, and used to brush it in the evenings.'

'No doubt. It is rather curious about the surviving girls. They must have been saved from the shipwreck and wandered back here, starving, I expect . . .'

' . . . And terrified, John. People set their dogs on them, big dogs.'

'It was a brutal age, my dear. They probably existed in the woods. Rugg says they were full of vagrants in the old days. When he talks about "old days" one can never quite place the period; he was harking back to a raid of the Danes in Ethelred's reign, last week. Anyhow, there's

another entry further on. Wait a minute. Here it is. In sixteen-forty-seven someone noted that Mary Byam "petitioned the Parliamentary Commission on behalfe of herselfe and the rest of Mr. Byam his children" for food. They were granted a fifth of the tithes. I suppose their father's Roundhead parishioners refused to feed them. Not much help came for "Mr. Byam his children," I'm afraid.'

'Yet there was one Rugg left,' said Cecilia eagerly. 'He was kind. He made a boat for Cecill.'

'Meanwhile, during the Commonwealth this living was usurped (one can call it nothing else) by a Public Preacher. Most irregular,' John continued, warming to an indignation three centuries old.

'He was "the old man," a bad man, according to Cecill,' said Cecilia in parenthesis.

'He seems to have done nothing, let the whole parish go to rack and ruin. Not unlike my predecessor, I imagine. He was succeeded by a young man who must have been a decent sort. I deduce that because, after the Restoration, when Dr. Byam had returned and died here, he married the youngest daughter, Cecill. Now here, darling, we come to the most curious fact of all. His name was John Wood.'

'That accounts for everything. Why the children came back to us, why Cecill liked you, why the magic worked. Oh, John, those poor hungry bewildered children, striving not to beg nor to "speak common," and only regretting the lost doll! Now they have found it, perhaps they'll rest content.'

She never saw the children again.

AMBITION.

BY C. E. LAWRENCE.

By it the angels fell . . . and simply to mention those of the celestial hierarchy whose downfall half-emptied Heaven and established Pandemonium (as a prelude to the Machine Age) is to discover that our subject brings us into touch with some who in their times were highly exalted. For of kings, emperors and tyrants, whose records are written darkly in the pages of history ; of Attila, Alexander, Cæsar and Napoleon ; of such as Louis Napoleon, that charlatan, and Cardinal Wolsey, that worse than unscrupulous would-be Pope ; as well as of others whose aims were venturesome beyond their powers and whose failure was absolute I sing—or would sing if prose were not easier.

But while the company met in discussing this subject may be of the best, as measured by the standards of Mrs. Leo Hunter ; in other than the shallow social values it is not so good, for, in studying those who have been ambitious, we are brought to witness glaring defects in manners and personal character, which the best people should not have—and haven't.

Undue self-confidence, vanity and a hard sort of pride, as well as selfishness, are essential to the ambitious in all the degrees of their aspiration ; while the greater exponents of that 'grievous fault,' as Mark Antony called it, have also given expression to baseness, remorselessness and cruelties which blackened whole chapters of the records of mankind.

Beside those darker characteristics, something of the energy of genius also is required to direct the approach of

the greatly ambitious to power. But before completing this detail of one of the world's first weaknesses and outstanding forces it may be well to consider a few examples—always the more entertaining part of an essay.

I return, therefore, to the leading names in our earliest group; to Attila, Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar and Napoleon. Those are but four of the multitudes who have suffered from their selfish complaint, yet they stand out from others of the kind through the compass and determination of their ambition and its success—for a time. Each of them, with the unerring eloquence of fact, preaches the moral of the ultimate failure of the ambitious and reveals the folly, ludicrous and pathetic, that it is, of climbing a ladder to catch hold of a star.

Attila, the Hun, who in his tempestuous character was very like Marlowe's Tamburlaine, appears to have been a despot of limitless passions and leonine strength with the mind of a horned bull. He had such power, through the determination of his will and the rapt obedience of the wild armed hordes who followed him, that his lightest word could be expressed in terror. He ransacked provinces, overturned thrones, made kings captive, and from widespread plunderings and tribute gathered to himself wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, and before the end, as with most of those who complacently accepted the adulations of peoples prostrate before them, came to see himself as divine.

One wonders how such self-accepted deities bore the aches and grosser infirmities to which at times all flesh is subject. Historians, however, reveal little or nothing of that. They have preferred to talk of battles, murders and the degenerate love-affairs of self-willed monarchs and of those who would be kings, rather than of the effects of some royal indisposition on the tempers of a Court and the destinies of nations.

Certain Frenchmen in their anxieties to excuse Napoleon and not justify those English, have declared that an untimely attack of indigestion was the cause of his defeat at Waterloo ; but evidently one can't have everything put into the history-books.

In his case one prefers to remember the ' thin red line,' and the squares of glittering British bayonets, with the slow but sure approach of Blücher.

When Attila had touched the supremacy of vanity by taking himself to be divine, he was slain, stabbed as legend tells us, by his wife on their wedding-night. Which brings us to the point of discovery that everything associated with vaulting ambition in the end must come to the ironic downfall ; as the climax to grandiloquence or of cocksureness is almost certain to be the grave man's pity or the giggle of a fool.

And no irony could be greater than the circumstance that the pride and magnificence of conquerors should be snuffed-out with the carelessness that may go with the death of a starved cat. ' The paths of glory lead '—not only to the grave, but often to that which is less excellent ; for the grave is an honourable institution and in spite of the silliness and ugliness with which—in its futilities how pathetically !—it may be decked, is the only entirely democratic institution. The paths of glory happen also to lead to anti-climax.

Alexander the Great was of finer clay than Attila—being simply heroic and, in brief, a gentleman. There was gold in his spiritual substance. He had the heart of a man ; he loved his comrades and was loved by them. The scene of his dying in failure after his old faithful soldiers had filed past him to bid him their last farewell is one of the more moving episodes of literature and history. For him to overrun the world and then to sigh because, having passed the

Indus, there were no more worlds for him to conquer is a travesty which, if it were true, must have made the gods laugh. Yet, unlike Attila, on the whole he was morally and with inspiration great and seems not to have hurt his natural fineness with anything petty.

Yet his quest was that of an inspired fool who spent himself in vastest dreams, chasing the glinting shadows that beckoned him over seas, rivers, mountains, marshes and the wildernesses wherein men may easily perish ; but never did he falter in himself and when the worst happened to his army sought first to relieve the hardships of his soldiers.

His greatness was such that he inspired others who were spiritually great to follow his courses. The chivalrous Montrose wrote on his copy of Quintus Curtius—

*As Philip's noble son did still disdain
All but the dear applause of merited fame,
And nothing harboured in that lofty brain
But how to conquer an eternal name ;
So, great attempts, heroic ventures shall
Advance my fortune, or renown my fall.*

It is ironical that Alexander, richly endowed with the qualities that comprise greatness and one of the best of those who have marched through the sun-glare and dust of world-adventure, should also have been small enough to believe that he too was deified, although in his case there was justification for the idea ; as, beside his lofty dreams that had found some achievement, he knew that the gods of the ancient world, whether in Greece, Macedonia, Rome, Syria, Persia or India, were closely enough linked by legend with mankind to be taken as their brothers of the half-blood ; while they were known to share the faults and passions of humanity and especially their vanities and lusts.

It was only in their alleged miracles, fantastic and un-

convincing, that they showed any positive difference from humankind, and with them those marvels were generally of the order that are nowadays available in the cabinets of the cheaper conjurors.

So far as Alexander was concerned, his extraordinary success and charm were sufficient to induce those who best knew him to believe that he might have worked miracles if he had chosen to do so, and when death brought its realities to the deserted body those who had loyally followed him were willing still to believe in his immortality. Through his sincerity Alexander almost defeated the irony of the gods ; which shows how nearly he came to the conquest of the world.

Yet he did not escape that form of the crowing counterblast which most sorely would have vexed him ; for, as some allege, his skull was taken from the sarcophagus that contained his bones and is to be seen on a cushion of velvet on the glass shelf of a museum at Istanbul. Yet is that circumstance really ironical, or merely a vulgarity with no mirth to sweeten it ; as assuredly is so with the skull of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, exposed, it is said, in a museum somewhere in Austria ?

Structures of bone, those houses of minds gave forth from the one visions of conquest too vast for this Earth to satisfy and from the other inspirations of the happiest music, delicate, ethereal, in fantasy laughing and lovable, that also, through 'Don Giovanni,' held echoes of scorn to point the final absurdities of lustful man brought up sharply against the eternities.

If those skulls, said to be 'on show,' are genuine ; then surely the dust of humanity once-radiant matters nothing and only the unseen glory counts. Shakespeare put the truth of it on the lips of Hamlet ; 'Alexander died, Alex-

ander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust ; the dust is earth ; of earth we make loam ; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel ?'

But was there, indeed, nothing else ?

Imperious Cæsar was of lesser substance and safer clay than Alexander of Macedon, though had he lived longer he too must have assumed the usual divinity. He had greatness—greatness enough to appreciate the disciplines that come from being deaf in one ear. With his tramping legions and through powers of brain and the skilled uses of the arts and science of the soldier, he over-ran the best parts of the conveniently available Earth, and when notoriety or fame or glory came to him bore it with such prudence that he affected to ignore it. Yet that did not save him ; for although upon the Lupercal he thrice refused a kingly crown, we know as well as did envious Casca that he would have taken it gladly—as also Cromwell in his time would have—if he had been confident of his ability to keep it. As it was, the refusal did not save him and the hurrying course of events gave Antony the opportunity to make one of the finest efforts of mob-oratory that gods (in the theatre) or groundlings have listened to.

Cæsar's end was untidy, yet also in its simplicity great, as with his 'Et tu, Brute !' and a look of mingled surprise and reproach at the noblest Roman of them all, he muffled his face in his mantle and with the indifference of despair in greatness, fell.

*O mighty Cæsar ! Dost thou lie so low ?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,
Shrunk to this little measure ?*

Dante paid him his final and the supreme tribute ; for

in the last depths of the Inferno, with Judas as their companion, we find Brutus and Cassius dangling together by the frozen river Cocytus and close to the eternally-defeated Satan, there to share the contempt of the universe for ever because of their treachery.

Probably we know too much about Napoleon, the last on our brief list of the supreme conquerors of what have proved to be dazzling and blood-stained shadows. It is sad to realise how the records of his greatest, lightest, most foolish deeds and sayings have been ransacked, often for cheap purposes. Nothing of him has been too small for his admirers and enemies to drag into the open and contemplate. His indigestion, his weaknesses over women, his personal indiscretions, meannesses, ingratitude; the ways in which he was morally dominated, for the time, by his Empresses Josephine and Marie Louise; his unclean habits, his impatience with subordinates and the partialities that led to their failing him at crises, deserting him—Murat, Marmont, Bernadotte—in the very infamy of worldly caution.

Such details that disgust and sadden have almost more prominence in the modern conception of Napoleon's character than his brilliant generalship, his dashing strategical movements and his established code of laws, on which volumes upon volumes have been written, printed and read, to leave behind them little more than vague impressions of noisy, battering campaigns drenched in blood, that ended in the débâcles of Moscow and Waterloo.

The gods in their ironies had opportunity to shriek with laughter over him and did so; for morally and physically he was small and they mocked him in ways that would have vexed him exceedingly if he had known of them. It was not with the *sauve-qui-peut* of Waterloo and his galloping from the field in his carriage, or through the careless indignity

of the unlettered grave at St. Helena ; but in the after-revelations when his coffin having been brought to France was opened and his poor body revealed—with a toe-nail grown long through the leather of the boot. Could there be a more contemptuous last note than that on the pretensions of greatness ?

*The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers ; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.*

In their several ways those conquerors had genius. Others who were greatly ambitious had not the strengths which could bring their almost-justification, as with Louis Napoleon, who revived the Empire of his uncle to make it clattering and glittering, a thing of suspicions and over-coloured shreds and gauds and gilded patches ; until his vanities and self-deceptions brought it tumbling down and himself to the climax of Sedan and the forgetfulness of Chislehurst. Adventurer and cheat from the beginning, he struck attitudes, but had no spiritual fineness—not even his uncle's faith in the glamour of an imaginary star—to lift him out of the intrigues of selfish politics.

Others like him have rattled sabres and flourished mailed fists in peace-time to find them break or crumble under the trials of war. All that is only so much show and noise. The truth of greatness rests on moral stature. Many of the mistakes of history have been due to the faults of little men in high places ; moral dwarflings decked with the glamour of Kingship or a knighthood too heavy for their strengths and circumstance.

I will now proceed to the superlatives known as Women,

who also can be ambitious and even ruthless in the determination to secure what they want, though nearly always, in fairness be it said, their purpose in being so is to benefit others and especially their lovers, husbands or sons. In their selfishness generally they are selfless, though also when strongly caught by the passions, sacred or profane, of love they may provide the exceptions that prove the rule. In that service there is no extreme to which some women will not rise or sink and no necessary sacrifice they will not make ; while, unlike Orpheus, if put to a test like his, they would probably keep to the last letter of the bargain made and, however tempted to do so, not look back prematurely at the loved one and thereby destroy the desired ending.

This truth is seen in the *Helöise* of medieval history and in the *Juliet* born of the knowledge of a poet's heart—both heroines in their spiritual completeness being equally true. Each would have given her dearest hopes for the benefit of the one beloved. As also *Nancy Sikes* would have done—and *Bill Sikes'* dog ; but he seems not to have been a lady, and, therefore, is not entirely suited to our example.

But we cannot overlook such glaring exceptions to the rule of unselfishness as *Cleopatra* and *Catherine of Russia* represent. They were notorious and limitless in their passions, while ambitious also to preserve their enthroned privileges. It must, however, be remembered that in intellect and spirit they were less women than men ; while as lovers they had something of the tendency of the female spider to devour her mates when their crucial purpose was fulfilled. *Cleopatra* and *Catherine* did not go so far in their wanton cruelties as the legendary *Semiramis* is said to have gone ; but the uncertain records of their personal history are heavy with selfishness and fickleness. Even the very recent death of her great lover, and one of the supremest

in the courts of passion, did not prevent Cleopatra from casting eyes of selfish calculation on the victorious Octavius ; in the desperate hope of his sympathy saving her and her ambitions from the destruction she had brought on herself.

One other woman, however, must I name who does illustrate the spirit of self-sacrifice and of freedom from ambition that generally exalts her sex. Joan of Arc, inspired by the visions and voices of saints or, as others have declared, by pagan spirits that haunted the Fairy tree at Domrémy, had her mission ; and no aspiration could have been purer than hers to rescue France from the invaders that overwhelmed it. She followed her inspiration to its end, and her mission fulfilled, with the King, that little-worthy Charles the Seventh, crowned at Rheims, implored those with her to allow her to retire to her native village and the home that her womanhood longed for.

They would not let her go, and although she felt that her inspiration to victory was ended with what had been accomplished, she went on to the agony and glory of her tragedy. Yet what an opportunity she had—if she had been selfishly ambitious—with the soldiers behind her, trusting her and confident in her supernatural strength and mystic fortune, to take and occupy even the throne of her country ! Happily for the wonder of her story she was too simple and great for that !

The drift of this study carries us now far down, it may be with something of a shock, to regions that seem uncertainly to suggest the dinginess of the proverbial backstairs. From the heights to which the Pucelle has carried us we come to an interlude almost of comic smallness—to those pettiest of ambitious people, of whom the chief, to flatter them with that brave unimportance, are the Snobs.

Although the aim of such creatures is of the narrowest, sometimes in their self-assertiveness they are tremendous ; and the worst of them can be very Berserks of bad manners in the determination to secure acquaintance with those who seem to them to matter socially.

The kindly Thackeray, who was better able to analyse and make his old-fashioned fun of Snobs because confessedly he was himself one, was fascinated by them. In most of his writings the Snob is shown as popping-up his oiled and silly head to look for those whose parasite or social tyrant he might be. In those days snobbery was rampant. Its examples strutted or crawled in all the showy places and nobody was more clearly their patron than glorious George, the Prince Regent. A story is told of his meeting Tom Moore in Ireland and asking if he belonged to the Moores of Waterford. 'No, sir,' answered the little poet who himself loved overmuch to hobnob with greatness, 'my father was a Dublin grocer'; whereupon the First Gentleman in Europe turned on his heel and went.

Snobs, however, are not the only small-natured ones who are ambitious. Greed for self-advancement is even more odious than the lighter forms of toadyism, because faults worse than vanity must go to its fulfilment. Envy of others is amongst those faults, and disloyalty, and often the worst ingratitude. Nearly always, where such creatures have risen, it has been on the backs and through the kindness of others ; but almost as certain as the law of gravitation they forget the help they had received the moment their object is attained and through that infirmity are apt themselves to come croppers. In like manner often the selfishness that urged them to climb prevents their helping someone else lest he become a rival ; while the occupant of a desired place must be got out of it by hook or by crook, and generally,

if managed at all, it seems to be done by crook. In politics this fault has been marked—but here we cast no stones ! That world is too full of glass-houses set among brickfields.

I will end this less-attractive aspect of the enquiry with an axiom that applies to all the ambitious, whether they are absolute or insignificant. In their dictionaries two words are missing : ‘Impossible’ and ‘Thank-you.’

Yet what is it really for—that fuss and petty scheming, it may be even with abject cringing to get on ; those vulgarities of push, pretence and selfishness ? As the purpose sought varies from the sordid to the wrongly sublime, so must the character of the reward vary ; while always a part of the allure must rest in the excitement of the chase ; as is so even when it means the slow poisoning to death of an elderly woman for the sake of her savings, as was the crime of the murderer Seddon, whose ambition in life was nothing better than to secure a larger amount of invested wealth for himself and the social importance that is supposed to go with it.

Years ago Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley, the popular ‘Sir Garnet’ of the eighties, having been asked what in his view was the supreme reward of the soldier, answered, ‘Glory.’ Well, harvests of military glory have been reaped—and spilt and lost—in the last twenty-five years and famous names proclaimed the world over. Yet the glory of it has proved doubtful in colour and strangely transient, truly a ‘bubble reputation at the cannon’s mouth’ (as is so also with Garnet Wolseley) ; and, to judge from the volumes written by some of them, he is a rare general whose record is found to be impressive after a time. With all the publicity of wireless, biographies, autobiographies, and that of the Press, with its laudatory obituaries, the sum-total of such

glory amounts to little more than that of the village Hampdens and mute inglorious Miltons who sleep in the churchyard of Gray's *Elegy*.

In contemplating the incidence of Ambition one is bound to dwell chiefly on its final effects, the fruits which when tested are nearly always like those of the Fallen Angels of *Paradise Lost* who, at the moment of their seeming triumph that followed their counter-attack after the great disaster, with Eve deceived and Adam betrayed, found it turned to ashes and the applause of victory degraded to a dismal universal hiss.

Sometimes the social climber or careerist is able to convince himself that, despite the fact that he has not succeeded, he is yet not disappointed and even may convince himself, in the face of the evidence to the contrary, that he has achieved what he aspired to ; for necessarily his vanity must be as the hide of a pachyderm enclosing a bladder of wind. Often the disappointment felt is expressed in blame of others who possibly had blocked the way or not given the encouragement expected ; while it is a frequent effect of too-evident pushfulness that it is answered by the passive resistance of those who, had they been tactfully dealt with, might have helped.

But enough of the small and very small fry ; the importances that have no importance ! Let us return to that aspect of life's harlequinade which shows the final curtain falling on the efforts of the ambitious.

*Abbas, Episcopus, Princeps,
Pulvis, Umbra, Nihil,*

is the epitaph on the tomb of an Italian cardinal, once the abbot, bishop and prince of the Church, who had come to

that ultimate reality of dust, shadow and nothing. No other words could more effectually paint the vanity of the end of glistening circumstance. There was his Eminence, seated by the altar in the magnificence of his exalted office, robed, jewelled and veiled from common eyes by the clouds of incense that rose before him, a symbol of the prayers of humanity that ceaselessly ascend to the Most High ! Hard, indeed, was it for that generous prince of the Church, when approached with the humble supplications of rich, poor, small and great, and whose authority affected the welfare of innumerable souls and extended into temporal regions also, not to feel superhuman at times, and even closely akin to the saints and angels.

But the wisdom of heart and mind that enabled him to rise, evidently also helped him spiritually, when the flesh of his body was growing weary, wrinkled, stained and diseased, to read aright the truths of worldly conditions—

*Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor, crooked scythe and spade.*

Old age brought its preachments to him who knew well that Father Death has the most eloquent of all sermons to deliver ; and so it was that the Cardinal, the wisdom of whose epitaph is simple and profound, came to see how princeliness in Church or State must fade and the last aspects of this estate of Earth, however glorious in the world's sense, be dust, shadow and nothing.

The irony of the end of all things earthly—for of the ultimate recompense in Heaven necessarily no lay man can confidently speak—is eloquent especially over those of proud spiritual authority ; and to one who regards it with

no intention of irreverence and only in its simplest human aspects, nothing can be more profoundly saddening than the exhibition of the skeleton of Saint Carlo Borromeo in a chapel of the crypt of Milan Cathedral. Decked in his Cardinal's biretta and robes, it lies in a glass sarcophagus and is surrounded by jewels, illuminated by electric lamps. The bones are exposed, not only to the adoration of the faithful but to the open-mouthed curiosity of trippers from all the world over.

It is true that on the occasion of my visit, before the mechanical device which revealed the relics of the saint was applied and the unhappy show began, the priest-attendant in the chapel donned a surplice, to mark the sacred solemnity of that exhibition. When he was so attired, he set in motion the machinery that, with automatic perfection, revealed the contents of the sarcophagus and then sat on a stool—to read a newspaper. It was one more touch of the irony over worldly greatness that may be expressed in indifference.

How much more consonant with the Cardinal's character and memorable life-work would it have been if his tired bones had been laid to rest in God's earth, there to dissipate—their mortality to immortality—under the gentle ministrations of Nature, than be exposed to the curious for a fee, especially as at my visit German tourists—not of the Cardinal's branch of the Faith—sprawled their arms before the relics and jabbered over the commercial value of the jewels displayed. 'Sic transit Gloria Mundi!'—words used in the ritual that precedes the coronation of a Pope—is a fitting comment on all that.

The trouble is that such vulgarities as are disclosed with the relics of Saint Carlo often follow the elaborate circumstance that goes with the greatness of ambitious churchmen. 'Servus Servorum,' the term habitually used by every Pope

to represent the spiritual humility required of him who attains to the supreme office, should also—if only to escape the ironies—be the ideal accepted by other religious ministrants, and so enlink the humblest deacon or deaconess in the lowliest Puritan assembly with the most ornate of any hierarchy, be he Abbas or Episcopus or Princeps.

For such brave humility was verily the garment of St. Francis that everyone may wear.

And what in the end does it all amount to? To aspire is surely right; to seek to influence one's contemporaries in a cause, to work as Wilberforce did, and John Howard, and Elizabeth Fry, and Father Damien—and not only those whose purposes were of spiritual and religious value, but those also who aspire to serve publicly in and out of politics and lead their fellows in practical life, improving the everyday, is commendable. Fame is worthy and the work that brings it may be good. Its value rests in the motive and quality of the aim.

But the ambition which in mere vanity and without scruple strives to reach the not-worth-while is, as we have seen, a chase of bubbles, and every bubble, however brightly glittering, is bound in time to burst; while all such huntings and scrambles, so frequently wearying, bruising and dusty, must end where the paths of glory, and those less than glorious, lead to.

When that end is marked by nothing but a tombstone, the irony often is emphasised by its assertion of virtues that never were entirely there; and so the pious fraud is strengthened to continue until the winds and rains obliterate the vanity and nothing is left for the years to look upon but a worn, illegible stone standing crookedly among weeds.

MIRAGE.

*He went into the desert on a silly youthful quest,
 For he heard the coyotes calling from the great wide West.
 There was heat and dirt a-plenty, and the devil kept the pace,
 But he hurried on a-seeking for the dream within his breast.
 Tranquil is the moment when the heat-waves race—
 Malapi, alkali, and trails of silver lace.
 He rode a pinto pony, and he tinkled like a bell—
 Silver-mounted cowboy in the desert's spell :*

*The mountains were a-dancing where the storm-clouds pass,
 The mountain streams were flowing through a green and fertile
 dell*

*Where the cattle were a-grazing in the cool lush grass,
 And ducks and drakes were sporting in the deep morass.
 The snowy peaks were pointing to the chilly blue sky ;
 A cabin in the foreground with a dame hard by ;
 The pine trees were a-singing their same sad song,
 And the quaking asps were playing with the parched and eager
 eye ;*

*A woodpecker drumming as a drummer beats his gong,
 And a kildeer calling—— But it couldn't last for long !*

*Lonesome was the winding trail and bitter was the dust,
 But the long way—the lone way, whispered ' Must ! '
 Sagebrush and greasewood and buttonsage forever ;
 Jogging through the rimrocks with his heart in trust—
 Green and grey and grey and green where the skylines quiver,
 Flowing on and onward as a silent frozen river.*

*Incense was a-fuming as the sandalwood of Rome ;
Quiet came and whispered in his ear of home.
'Home !' there came a whisper in a tone not heard ;
Through tall shades—the long shades a night-hawk whirred.*

*Brooding on the future and a dull dry-lake ;
Riding, riding, riding in the mustang's wake,
He heard a mournful piping in the brush obscured and low—
A thin pipe—a shrill pipe : he thought it was a fake :
Mirages come to fool a man and man must say them no.
And he jogged along unheeding where the Texas-tommies blow.*

*This poet was a seeker for the Holy Grail of Truth ;
He sought the great adventure through his gorgeous crystal, youth ;
But he found the great illusion where the coyotes cry,
And he jogged along till sundown through the malapi.*

CULLEN JONES.

San Francisco.

A TALE FROM TIMBUCTOO.

BY BERNARD ROWLEY.

I HAD this tale straight from the lips of Mr. Hoyer, who for the last nineteen years of his life was vicar's warden in my own parish, and whose veracity should therefore be beyond question. Mr. Hoyer graciously allowed me to take notes of his story as he told it to me, but he charged me not to make it public during his lifetime. A vicar's warden, he said, cannot be too careful.

This condition I have loyally observed, for Mr. Hoyer departed this life only last month, in the eighty-ninth year of his age. He was a fine old gentleman, tall and broad-shouldered still despite his years, and bearded like a Capuchin friar. Perhaps by reason of his long residence in the remoter districts of Africa his speech was slow, thoughtful, and deliberate, as if he were still out of practice in the use of his mother-tongue. When in the mood he would tell strange stories of his adventurous past; so strange, some of them, that but for his age and position one might have been tempted to suspect him of romancing.

Yet is it truly if platitudinously said that truth is stranger than fiction; and I for one have the utmost faith in his integrity. And besides—— But let Mr. Hoyer's story speak for itself.

It was (I see by my notes) in the year 1894 that Mr. Hoyer, at that time a middle-aged trader engaged in free-lance commerce on the West Coast of Africa, took up temporary residence in Timbuctoo. (They spell it Timbuktu now,

but to do so in this story would be an anachronism.) Exactly what branch of commerce Mr. Hoyer was engaged in, I never discovered; nor is that in any way relevant to this tale. He was, in his own words, simply a 'trader,' and I gather that the word has a wider connotation in Africa than in this country.

However that may be, it was in 1894 that Mr. Hoyer made a great journey across the southern Sahara from Dakar, and, after sundry adventures and mishaps which need not be related here, established himself, with the consent of the French military authorities and the consequent toleration of the native population, as a kind of contractor and general emporium-keeper in Timbuctoo.

At the present day, I believe, Timbuctoo is only a degree or two less civilised and accessible than, say, Tangier or Oran. It is approached by wide concrete roads, over which six-wheeled lorries and cars can travel at high speeds, while the city itself is as orderly and well planned as any to be found in the French colonial empire. But in 1894 Timbuctoo was still an almost legendary city, a place of mystery and glamour to the outer world. Its curious name, combined with the publicity given to its occupation by the French only a year earlier, had served to make 'Timbuctoo' something of a household word in Europe. The name had been avidly seized upon by music-hall comedians. No humorous paper or magazine dared risk printing an issue without at least one reference to it. Such catch-phrases as 'Go to Timbuctoo!' or 'I wished him (or her) to Timbuctoo!' were popular euphemisms to be heard on the lips of all and sundry—indeed, they are not even now quite extinct. In short, Timbuctoo was definitely 'news,' as we should say to-day.

Mr. Hoyer procured for himself a somewhat pretentious

house on the river side of the city, just sufficiently far removed from the stench and squalor of the *bazaars* to be habitable by a white man, yet not too remote to be convenient for trading. The chief disadvantage of the site was its comparative loneliness, which compelled Mr. Hoyer to stay always at home after dark lest thieves should break in and loot his precious stock. But against this drawback must be reckoned the considerations that Mr. Hoyer was the one and only Englishman in Timbuctoo, that his knowledge of the French tongue was inadequate for any extensive colloquing with the officers of the garrison, and that in any case Mr. Hoyer had but little use for Frenchmen.

It must have been a lonely existence, but trade was so good that Mr. Hoyer forbore to grumble. And so life went on, monotonous and uneventful, until——

One night Mr. Hoyer broke with custom and dined out, his host being the Military Governor of Timbuctoo. Had it been simply a social invitation Mr. Hoyer would undoubtedly have made his excuses, but it so happened that he had wind of a highly lucrative contract, and for that reason he decided to take the risk. So he locked and bolted his house and store-rooms and betook himself to the Governor's quarters.

Now the Military Governor was a convivial soul—one of those large, laughing, bearded Frenchmen who are the salt of the Gallic earth. He recognised in Mr. Hoyer a kindred spirit, and the latter got his contract with far less difficulty than he had expected. Then, to seal the bargain, the pair of them sat down to demolish a case of most excellent wine. Neither got drunk; but as glass after glass and bottle after bottle of the wine disappeared, Mr. Hoyer's determination to make an early start back to his own house slowly ebbed away. When at length he submitted himself to a

hearty but hirsute valedictory kiss and felt his way out into the star-spangled, blue-velvet night, it must have been nearly midnight.

A cold wind blows off the desert at night in those parts, in startling contrast to the oven-like heat of the day, and Mr. Hoyer felt in tremendous spirits as he made his way homeward. The heady fumes of the Governor's wine, mingling with the pleasant coolth of the air, gave him an unwontedly carefree feeling. The contract that he had secured that night would outset to an infinite degree any depredations caused by robbers on his present stock, so his mind was calm and untroubled.

There was no moon, and the streets were unlit, but Mr. Hoyer had had the foresight to bring with him a hurricane-lantern to guide his footsteps in the required direction. He came safely out of the main *bazaar* and turned down the long, winding by-way at the end of which his house was situated. The whole city seemed shrouded in slumber, and he encountered no living creature. Breathing a sigh of relief—for a midnight stroll through any native city is inevitably attended by a certain amount of risk—Mr. Hoyer turned at last into the compound of his own house. Here again, all seemed to be quiet.

He was half-way up the path when, out of the corner of one eye, he caught a glimpse of something white moving in the darkness.

Instantly his brain was on the alert. His first impression, naturally enough, was that there were thieves about after all. Turning swiftly, he drew his revolver that he always carried, and shouted, '*Who goes there?*'—in English first, by instinct, and then in French and in the local dialect. Even as his voice rang out through the silent night he saw the white figure again, and he noted with surprise, not unmixed with

apprehension, that instead of being in flight it was standing motionless, perhaps twenty yards away.

‘Who goes there?’ Mr. Hoyer barked again, his finger still hesitating on the trigger.

‘Oh!’ came the reply, in a voice that shook Mr. Hoyer to the depths. ‘Oh! It’s—it’s me——’

Mr. Hoyer halted in sheer amazement: for the voice that he heard was the voice of a woman, and it was speaking the soft, cultured English of the West End of London. Even the lapse in grammar was in accord with the usage of Mayfair.

It is not easy for us, perhaps, to put ourselves entirely in Mr. Hoyer’s position. But if we remember that Mr. Hoyer himself had personal and positive knowledge that there was not one single white woman within several hundred miles of Timbuctoo at that date, we shall at least be able to gauge the measure of his surprise, if only approximately. Not even the French officers of the garrison had yet been permitted to bring their wives or mistresses to an outpost so newly occupied. And in any case, this voice in the dark was as English as Big Ben.

For a few seconds Mr. Hoyer stood irresolute. He laughingly confessed when relating this story to me that it cost him no small effort to display even this slight and negative form of fortitude, for his hair was erect and his heart was in his gullet. But then at length something seemed to snap within him, and, lantern in one hand and revolver in the other, he advanced firmly on the apparition.

One must suppose that it would have been something of a relief had the said apparition vanished into thin air or resolved itself into some extraneous yet reasonable object. But that is exactly what it did not do. It remained completely stationary until Mr. Hoyer came up to it, and then

revealed itself to be precisely what its voice had suggested—namely, a white woman, young and beautiful in a rather hard way, with masses of rich auburn hair piled high upon a shapely head (for they neither shingled nor bobbed in 1894) and wearing a manifestly Paris-made evening gown of shimmering white, cut low upon her bosom in the fashion of those days. There was a rope of fine pearls about her neck, and in the pale glimmer of the hurricane-lantern Mr. Hoyer caught the glint of several rings upon her fingers. He also noticed, vaguely and uncomprehendingly, that in her left hand she was clutching a small square of white figured linen.

‘Now may God have mercy on my wicked soul!’ Mr. Hoyer ejaculated aloud, as his incredulous eyes took in these details. ‘Who on earth are you, and how did you come here?’

But the woman stood so still, and gazed at him with such a strange expression in her china-blue eyes, that once again the fear came upon Mr. Hoyer that this vision was but the figment of a disordered imagination. Nerving himself to the effort, he presently slipped the revolver into his pocket and stretched forth a hand to touch her. With a sharp intake of breath the woman drew back out of his reach, but not before his fingers had made grazing contact with the cool flesh of a bare white arm.

‘So—you’re real, are you?’ gasped Mr. Hoyer uncertainly. His nerves were on edge, and he went on almost fiercely: ‘Who are you, I say? Damn you, are you dumb? Tell me who you are, woman, and how you came here?’

‘I—I don’t know,’ was the hesitant reply, after a tense pause. ‘I don’t know who I am—or where I am—or how I came here.’ Her voice (and it was still the voice of May-

fair) rose to an angry sob, and she pressed a jewelled hand against her forehead. 'I—I can't remember anything—anything at all. Where am I?'

'You can't remember?' Mr. Hoye shouted, trying vainly to curb his impatience. 'But—surely you must know who you are! Your name—what is your name?'

'I don't know,' the woman answered in a frightened whisper. 'Oh! My God! What has happened to me? I—I can't remember——' And then, without warning, she toppled forward in a dead faint.

Mr. Hoye caught her, and somehow or other succeeded in carrying her indoors. Her weight, and the expensive perfume that pervaded her, served to bring it home to him that, however impossible any other suggestion might seem, she was at least no phantom. She was, in fact, a tall and finely made woman, and even the gigantic Mr. Hoye found the task of carrying her by no means inconsiderable. He judged her to be perhaps thirty years of age.

He laid her on his own bed—the only bed in the house—and lit a brass table-lamp to supplement the light of the hurricane-lantern. Even had his brain been functioning normally it seems doubtful if he would have known how to deal with a swooning woman. As it was, he could only stand foolishly watching her until, within a few minutes, she began to recover consciousness of her own accord.

Then Mr. Hoye remembered a precious bottle of cognac stowed away against some such contingency as this. He ran for it, tossed off half a cupful, neat, to steady his own nerves, and then presented a similar dose at the pale lips of the now-recovering woman. She accepted it in silence, took a couple of dainty sips, grimaced as the cheap spirit assaulted her throat and palate, and then sat slowly up to face her host.

‘Feeling better?’ Mr. Hoye inquired gruffly, as he took the cup from her.

‘Better—yes.’ She answered him as if by instinct, and her blue eyes never once left his own. ‘I—I fainted, did I not?’

‘Yes,’ said Mr. Hoye.

‘So foolish of me,’ she commented, flicking her lips into the ghost of a conventional smile.

‘I might easily have done the same thing myself,’ said Mr. Hoye candidly. ‘Nearly did, as a matter of fact, when I heard your voice. I still don’t understand, madam, who you are, or how——’

‘No more do I,’ she put in, glancing nervously about the dim, dusty, untidy room. ‘I have simply no idea how I came here, nor even where I am. Where—where *am I*?’ she ended, a note of hysteria in her voice.

‘Why, this is Timbuctoo, madam,’ Mr. Hoye informed her, in much the same tone of pained surprise as a London policeman would employ if asked a corresponding question in Piccadilly Circus.

‘Timbuctoo?’ she repeated with a start. ‘*Timbuctoo*? Oh, impossible! Timbuctoo—in Africa, you mean?’

‘That is so,’ said Mr. Hoye, eyeing her curiously. ‘In the Sahara desert, to be precise. So far as I am aware, there is only one Timbuctoo in the world—and some would say that even this one is superfluous.’

‘But—but—oh, I don’t understand. How did I come here—to Africa even, far less to Timbuctoo? This is absurd! You are not deceiving me?’

‘Indeed I am not, madam.’

‘But it’s impossible! Am I dreaming, or is this really happening?’

Mr. Hoye shrugged his broad shoulders. ‘If you’re

dreaming, then I'm dreaming too, madam : and that doesn't seem to make sense, somehow.' He paused and passed a hand over his brow. 'Have you—er—remembered who you are yet, by any chance? My own name, incidentally, is Hoye—George Hoye, at your service—and I am a trader here.'

His guest watched him intently, as if she were slowly assimilating what he had told her. Then she bent her brows in thought, and peered with unseeing eyes into the gloom.

'Who am I?' Mr. Hoye heard her mutter, after an interval. 'Why, I am Alice, of course—Alice—Alice Settringhame. Yes, that is it. Alice Settringhame. Alice Settringhame.' And she continued repeating the name over and over again to herself, like a child learning a lesson.

The name stirred a faint chord in Mr. Hoye's subconscious memory. He was far from being an expert in the English aristocracy, but he had a vague idea that Settringhame was the family name of some peer or other. He drew a bow at a venture.

'The Honourable Alice Settringhame?' he suggested quietly.

'Yes—yes—that is it!' she replied eagerly. 'You know me, then? I am—I was—I am the second daughter of Lord Rusper. But——'

'Well, that's something,' said Mr. Hoye cheerfully, though he said it more to encourage her than because he felt any nearer a solution to the major problem. 'Your memory is on its way back already, you see, Miss Settringhame. We'll get this all straight in a minute, don't you worry!' And he forced a little laugh.

But even as he spoke he saw her start once again, as she glanced down at her left hand. He followed her gaze and saw that there was a wedding-ring on the third finger.

‘It looks to me,’ he said gently, ‘as if you were married, you know. Now let’s see if we can’t work this out. If you are Lord Rusper’s daughter, then Settringhame must have been your maiden name. But what about your husband—can’t you remember his name too?’

‘Why, yes, of course—— Of course I’m married! How foolish of me to forget that! I was married—oh, long ago, I think. . . . I married—yes, I married Martin: Martin Joyce-Secretan, you know. Yes! So I am Alice Joyce-Secretan now. But I can’t understand——’

‘Never mind,’ Mr. Hoyer comforted her. ‘We’re getting along famously, you know. We’ll have the whole business explained in next to no time now! How long have you been married—can you tell me that?’

‘The twenty-second of May,’ she answered like an automaton. ‘Yes, that was the date. I remember it perfectly . . . What year is it?’ she asked suddenly, as if stricken by a new fear.

‘Eighteen-ninety-four: the tenth of April, 1894—or rather, it must be past midnight now, so I suppose it must be the eleventh. Can you remember which year you were married? Was it last year, or——’

She shook her head. ‘Oh, no. We were married in—let me see—yes, in 1885. That is nearly nine years ago, isn’t it?’

‘Nine years next month, if you’re sure you’re not mistaken,’ Mr. Hoyer confirmed. ‘But, if you’ll pardon the liberty of my saying so, Mrs. Joyce-Secretan, you hardly look old enough to have been married nine years.’ (But he mentally crossed his fingers as he uttered the lie. In the light of the oil-lamps the woman looked fully thirty now—and a bad-tempered thirty at that.)

‘Thank you!’ She snapped out the words coldly, as

if suspicious of his sincerity. 'There is no mistake. I married very young. Too young, perhaps.'

'You must have,' Mr. Hoye rejoined smoothly. 'Very well, then : that disposes of one of my theories. You can't be on your honeymoon trip. Perhaps your husband has business out here, and has brought you with him ?'

But again she shook her head.

'Certainly not !' she declared emphatically. 'Why should Martin come to this dreadful place ? He has no interests here, and even if he had I should certainly have refused to accompany him. The Joyce-Secretans,' she went on, with more than a trace of hauteur, 'do not engage in commerce. We are of independent means.'

'I see,' said Mr. Hoye apologetically. He was beginning to take an intense dislike to this young woman, now that the first flush of surprise was past. There was something hard and unlovable about her ; a suggestion of snobbish uncharity which showed through her physical beauty. Mr. Hoye felt a resentment—unreasonable, perhaps, but a resentment nevertheless—against her intrusion into his quiet, monotonous life. For all that he had often enough longed, in the many years of his exile, to meet and enjoy the society of an Englishwoman again, he felt a sense of relief in the knowledge that this particular Englishwoman was nothing to him. He also began to feel sorry for her husband.

'Look here,' he proposed, after a pause. 'Since we don't seem to be making much progress by working forward, suppose we try working back for a change. Ten minutes ago, or thereabouts, I found you wandering in my compound. You remember that ?'

'Ye-es. I fainted, and you brought me in here.'

'I know—but that is working forward again. I want to go *back*, and find out how you got into my compound.

When we've got that we may be able to discover what you are doing in Timbuctoo. You see the idea ?'

'I suppose so. But——'

'Just a moment, Mrs. Joyce-Secretan. Let *me* ask the questions, please. Now, how did you get into my compound ? Down the road from the mosque of Sidi Yahia, and in through the gates ? Can you tell me that ?'

She gazed at him stupidly, frowning in perplexity.

'I cannot,' she replied. 'I do not remember anything before you called out to me. Or at least——' She hesitated.

'Yes ?' Mr. Hoyer prompted her.

'Oh, I suppose I'm mad,' she cried in a choking voice. 'I must be mad ! And yet I could have sworn——' Again she left her sentence unfinished.

'Of course you're not mad,' Mr. Hoyer put in kindly, though without inner conviction. 'Tell me what you could have sworn. Every little helps, you know.'

'But I must be mad, or dreaming !' Alice Joyce-Secretan wailed feverishly. She got up and began striding about the room. 'Listen, Mr. Boyes——'

'Hoyer,' amended Mr. Hoyer.

'Mr. Hoyer, then. You tell me that to-day is the tenth of April, 1894—or at least that that was the date until a few minutes ago. *And you are right !* How do I know ? Because I remember seeing that date—the tenth of April—on the silver calendar on the writing-table in my boudoir this morning. Yesterday morning, that is.'

'Your boudoir ?' Mr. Hoyer inquired sharply. 'What boudoir ? Where ? Not here in Timbuctoo ?'

She stamped her foot and rounded on him.

'Here ? Certainly not !' she snapped viciously. 'I have never been in this horrible place before in my life. I mean

my own boudoir, at home, in London. In Mount Street, Mayfair——'

'Hi ! Steady !' Mr. Hoye protested. 'You know, you're getting confused again. I mean, you couldn't possibly have been in London this morning, and here in Timbuctoo to-night !'

'I tell you I *was* !' she insisted, her temper rising with every word she spoke. 'If yesterday was the tenth of April, 1894, then I was at home, in my own house, yesterday morning. I was—I was—I *was* !—— I don't care what you say. It all comes back to me now. I'm beginning to remember perfectly. I can tell you how I spent every minute of the day.'

'You can, can you ?' asked Mr. Hoye softly. 'Very well, Mrs. Joyce-Secretan. Perhaps you will do so ?'

'I had breakfast in bed !' she exclaimed, in a high-pitched hysterical voice. 'Marianne, my maid, brought it to me, as usual. Then I took my bath, dressed, and went shopping. I could even tell you the names of the shops, and what I bought,' she ended obstinately.

'Never mind that,' said Mr. Hoye impatiently. 'Can you remember having luncheon ?'

'Yes—at the Splendide, with Lady Lisbon, Colonel Curtice, and Mr. and Mrs. Hartmann-Herbage. And afterwards I went home again, and rested till tea-time. Martin—my husband—came in then, and drank a whisky and soda. We—we quarrelled a little, as I fear we often do. I wished him to take me to the theatre. He wished to stay at home, as he had asked some friends in—men friends, of course, who I knew would sit smoking and drinking with Martin till midnight or later. I have no patience with my husband's friends, Mr. Hoye : an idle, good-for-nothing lot of wastrels, I consider them, and I never hesitate to let my husband

know my opinion of them. Since we have been married I have done my best to—to wean Martin from them, but he deliberately flouts my wishes!’ Here she stamped again, and her eyes flashed coldly. ‘For the first year of our married life I thought I had succeeded, but of late my husband has seemed to prefer their company to mine—an intolerable state of affairs.’

‘Still, better men than lady friends, perhaps,’ Mr. Hoyer suggested pacifically.

‘I disagree with you entirely!’ she flashed back. ‘If my husband were that kind of man, I should at least know how to deal with the situation . . . However, to return to this evening—yesterday evening, that is. Eventually, of course, I got my own way. Martin promised to take me to Her Majesty’s Theatre, though with no very good grace, I fear. He put off his friends, and I went upstairs to dress—’

‘What colour frock did you put on?’ Mr. Hoyer interjected sharply.

‘Why, my new white satin——’ She had answered before she saw the point of the question, but now this occurred to her, and she looked down at the gown in which she was clad. ‘*This* frock!’ she continued triumphantly. ‘This very same frock that I am wearing now! That proves—*proves*, does it not?—that this can only have happened a few hours ago.’

Mr. Hoyer sighed perplexedly, and again passed a hand over his forehead.

‘It looks like it, certainly,’ he admitted doubtfully.

‘Of course it does!’ said Mrs. Joyce-Secretan. ‘Well, I came downstairs, and my husband and I dined together. Then we drove to the theatre in our brougham, and stayed till the end of the performance. I enjoyed it, but Martin was—sulky. Afterwards he said he was tired and wanted

to get to bed, but I insisted that he should give me supper.'

('Poor fellow,' Mr. Hoyer murmured under his breath. His sympathy for Mr. Martin Joyce-Secretan had been growing more lively every moment. He reflected that if he, Mr. Hoyer, had utterly tired of this woman's superficial charms in about nine minutes, her husband must be in a parlous state after nine years of marriage. The very thought appalled him.)

'We went to the Café des Étrangers,' he heard her saying in her hard, rather metallic voice, 'and since the company in the main restaurant seemed rather—mixed, I *insisted* that we should have a private room. Martin grumbled at the expense, but of course I had my way. I insisted, too, on his ordering champagne, and although he selfishly said he would prefer whisky and soda I made him drink a glass of wine before we began supper. My wisdom in choosing champagne was immediately justified, for my husband became better tempered almost at once.'

('Resigned to his fate,' growled Mr. Hoyer to himself.) 'Yes?' he prompted her aloud.

But this time he failed to elicit an immediate response.

'I cannot quite remember what happened next,' Mrs. Joyce-Secretan complained presently. 'It is very curious. I remember having supper with my husband at the Café des Étrangers, and then—— Oh, it's absurd, but the next thing I recall is finding myself *here*!'

'Oh, come, come,' said Mr. Hoyer. 'There must be something else you can remember. Let's try working back again. You sat down to supper. You had champagne to drink. Now, what did you eat?'

She frowned thoughtfully.

'There was a clear soup,' she said, a moment later. 'And

then—yes, there was cold chicken. After that—oh, I *can't* remember.' Her voice was almost tearful now.

'There must have been a sweet,' Mr. Hoye assisted her. 'Or at any rate a savoury.'

'I can't remember, I tell you !' she snapped back peevishly. 'And what does it matter, anyhow ?'

'It matters a great deal,' Mr. Hoye persisted. 'Let's go back again to what you *can* remember. That chicken, for instance. Do you recall actually eating it ?'

'Yes, distinctly.'

'What joint did you have ?'

'A wing, and some of the breast,' she told him without hesitation.

'I see. And your husband ?'

'I did not notice particularly,' she answered carelessly. 'The other wing, I expect, and—oh, what does it matter ?'

'I want, if possible, to discover the very last moment you remember being in London,' Mr. Hoye explained. 'Now then, picture yourself eating that chicken. Did you finish your portion ?'

'Every bit of it. I was very hungry.'

'Good ! Now, when you had finished, did the waiter remove your plates ?'

'Let me see. No, I cannot remember him doing so. In fact—yes, I remember complaining to my husband of the slow service. We were kept waiting for some minutes after we had eaten our chicken. In fact——' Mrs. Joyce-Secretan broke off, looking a little confused.

'Yes ?'

'It was childish of us, of course, and perhaps a little vulgar, but I happened to notice the wish-bone lying on my husband's plate, and to pass the time I picked it up and

pulled it with him. A stupid, *bourgeois* thing to do, of course, but as we were quite alone . . .’

A staggering thought surged into Mr. Hoye’s overtaxed brain. Once again he felt his hair rising on his head.

‘Yes, yes!’ he exclaimed intently. ‘Never mind that, my dear madam. Tell me, now: did you actually pull this wish-bone with your husband?’

‘I’m afraid I did. As a matter of fact, it is the last thing I remember doing. A foolish, vulgar superstition! As if securing the larger half of that absurd bone could possibly grant one a wish! I really don’t know what came over me——’

‘Stop!’ cried Mr. Hoye, his voice tense with excitement. You pulled this wish-bone with your husband, and after that you remember nothing. *Nothing at all?*’

She looked at him intently. ‘I think I was wiping my fingers on my napkin—— Why, look! Here *is* my napkin!’ And she pointed tremulously to the square of figured linen which had been clutched in her hand when Mr. Hoye first saw her.

Mr. Hoye gasped, and swore under his breath.

‘God save my wicked soul!’ he muttered once again. But then, with a pertinacity that did him credit, he relentlessly returned to the point that was troubling him so sorely.

‘You pulled the wish-bone,’ he repeated firmly, striving to keep his voice under control. ‘Now, think very carefully, please. Can you by any chance call to mind which of you——er——won the pull?’

‘Oh, yes——my husband won,’ said Mrs. Joyce-Secretan. ‘I can distinctly see him with the large part of the bone in his hand; and he was obviously in a much better temper than he had been all the evening, for he closed his eyes and pretended to wish . . .’

‘But after that,’ she added hysterically, ‘the next thing I remember was finding myself here—in this *dreadful* place . . . What did you say its name is?’

‘Timbuctoo,’ Mr. Hoyer answered, very gravely indeed.

And that—believe me or not—would have been the end of this story had I allowed Mr. Hoyer to have his way. For quite a while he alternately ignored and pooh-pooh’d my indignant protests that the matter could not possibly be permitted to rest there. But at last, after a heated argument, he relented to the extent of asking me what more I wanted to know.

I gaped at him. ‘Why, I want to know what happened next, of course!’ I exclaimed. ‘I want to know what was the outcome of this amazing business. Did you wake up in the morning to find it was all a dream, or that the Governor’s wine had been too strong for you? And, if not, then I want to know what happened to the lady. Bless me!—her appearance must have caused a tremendous sensation in Timbuctoo.’

But Mr. Hoyer shook his venerable white head, and a cunning glint came into his frosty eye.

‘Oh, no,’ he replied presently in his slow, deliberate tones. ‘To tell the truth, she didn’t stay long enough for anyone else to see her. Indeed, you are the very first person in whom I have confided this strange adventure.’

‘Didn’t stay long enough?’ I repeated, badly perplexed. ‘But, my dear Mr. Hoyer—How on earth—’

Mr. Hoyer levered himself rheumily out of his chair, and stretched his aged limbs as a preliminary to departing.

‘The Café des Étrangers wasn’t the only place where they had cold chickens,’ he said, as he grasped my hand. ‘Hens are common enough in Africa, you know. In fact, it so

happened that I had a cold chicken in my own meat-safe at that very time. Fortunately the wish-bone was still intact. I went and cut it off, and——'

'Yes?' I demanded breathlessly.

'I won,' said Mr. Hoye simply. 'I closed my eyes and wished, and when I opened them again Alice Joyce-Secretan had already gone. Not a trace of her to be seen, except——' He chuckled quietly.

'Yes?' I asked again.

'That table-napkin,' said Mr. Hoye. 'She left that behind, and I had it for years, but in the end it was eaten by white ants. Good afternoon to you!'

CORNHILL.

*Oh, loud above the people
The London bells are glad,
And steeple answers steeple
To maze a country lad.*

*So now the bells are crying
In valleys far and dim,
And set the meadows sighing
That do not sigh for him.*

STEPHEN CASEY.

SHADES.

BY MYRTLE JOHNSTON.

SHADOWS—they were only shadows. Strange that they should flicker before him in the darkness in this place so remote from all they had ever known ! Outside. the extravagant moonlight glorifying air putrid with exhalations from the swamp beyond the half-breed Spanish village he already hated with a sick loathing ; inside, the darkness, noisy with invisible, though tangible, insects, and those shadows passing and repassing. It was like an opium dream, only his opium dreams had never been so fantastic, or disturbed him with bitter emotion.

There was himself—the young man in riding breeches, his dark hair ruffled by the wind, and serious, wide eyes gazing from under his hand at—what ? Richard could not see. He had not thought of that young man for years and yet there, suddenly and unmistakably, he rose confronting him. A fresh wind seemed to blow from him and stir the fetid atmosphere. Richard remembered those breeches—a bit old fashioned in cut these days, probably. He used to take a great deal of trouble to be well-dressed. He did not look like that now. How long ago must it have been ? Sixteen years. He was twenty-six then. He looked fifty now, even with make up, and the powdered wig he wore for his mandoline serenade number with dust and grime was so nearly the colour of his own hair that it made things worse rather than better. And of course the dope hadn't improved either his appearance or his singing. Only last night—but he turned with a shudder away from last night.

At twenty-six he had never thought of singing beyond a little training of his pleasant, light baritone just in case it should ever come in useful. But he could fence and box and was a good rider. He saw himself on Shamrock's back, reckless of life and limb, careering down a wooded slope, Hawk Canyon they called it. Had he really done that, and smiled while he galloped? That was young Peter Tancred on Starlight in hot pursuit—Peter, for whom he must have paid up close on two grand, counting poker debts. Old 'Smoky' Furniss had told him he was a fool and Peter another, but Peter was going to pay back as soon as ever he backed a winner, only they never did win. His face, with the familiar, gentle smile, was so vivid that Richard almost called out to him, 'Hallo, Pete! It's me—it's Dick!' But Peter passed on soundlessly and was gone, and besides he wouldn't know Richard now.

And there was old 'Smoky' himself, dressed up as a Red Indian, taking a childish enjoyment in looking as fierce as he could. He always loved dressing-up—'getting out of yourself,' he called it. Where was 'Smoky' now? Gone, all of them gone. He would never see them again. And still they came, the old faces, some blurred by time, some whose names he had forgotten, but each familiar as a fragment in the pattern of the past. Ah, what times those had been!

Suddenly, more clearly than any of them, with a clearness which made the reality a dream, he saw Viola. She was on her chestnut, Lightning, whom she loved less only than herself. Perhaps Lightning was the only creature in the world she ever loved. She bent low over his neck, her pale hair flying, while she laughed to herself secretively and silently, as if in an ecstasy only they two shared. But Viola was dead. Lightning had killed her; he had fallen with her. It had been very strange to see her lying quiet on the

wet grass. She was not quiet now. She jumped off Lightning, and stood calling to Richard, and in a moment his arms were round her. A tremor went through him to see her cling to him, the two heads, fair and dark, pressed close, and then their lips met. But Viola had never really kissed him. She had laughed at him. She would never tell him why she laughed.

So that was what he had been at twenty-six ! You seldom knew at the time. Probably he had thought himself quite different, but this was how he really had seemed—in happiness, in sorrow, in anger and in love. Women had implied to him that he was handsome, but he hadn't been completely sure. Now he knew that they were right. As for vigour and vitality, he had taken them for granted at a time when they made of him a king. Life was easy then, life was pleasant. He had been given his first leading part, and there was no reason, producers whispered, why a brilliant future should not be his. No reason indeed—no failure, no discouragement—merely what might be called a general slipping of everything, himself included.

Or was the reason to be found in that young face ? Did anything show there of a quality, or lack of a quality, which should have shunted the promising young actor somehow off his track, to fetch up in this barbarous lost corner of the Argentine ?

Now they were all drinking his health. He had done something noble, heroic, and had accepted from the State a position of great honour ; and now he and Viola were being married. They were leaving the church amid a cheering, waving crowd. But that was all a lie. He had never had Viola. She had laughed at him, and then she had died. And he was second tenor in a vaudeville troupe which played in barns and tents in places he had not known existed ;

and last night, being several degrees more drunk than usual, he had been pelted from the stage by a derisive, filthy and ignorant half-caste audience. It was all lies, lies, lies——

‘Dirty pig, keep quiet, can’t you?’ came a Spanish bark from beside him.

‘The young man—he is pretty,’ murmured the fat woman on his left, and her chins wobbled.

It was nothing to them that the film was sixteen years old, blurred and torn, without coherence or continuity. A film of any kind was a rare excitement, and they sat spellbound until, in sympathy with the soundless cheering of the wedding crowd, they burst into uproarious applause.

It was sickening that they should watch him kiss Viola—awful that this record of his youth was still afloat, to batter about until it fell to pieces up and down all the remote, unsavoury backstreams of the world. And then his feeling changed. He wanted to stand up and call out to the crowd in the stinking hut: ‘That’s me you’re yelling for—me, Richard Murtough! I may have been tight last night, but you’ve seen what I was. You’d have been dirt compared with me. I was strong and young, and I could act too. I made that film sixteen years ago, and they told me I’d end up on Broadway.’

Broadway!

Viola’s face was on the screen again, in her wedding veil, with the little downward slant of her left eyelid he used to tease her about. Slowly she turned her head until her eyes looked straight into his, and then she smiled. The young bridegroom who was Richard Murtough too was smiling. Peter and ‘Smoky’—they were all smiling, all laughing at him. He lurched to his feet and, stumbling over legs and crawling children, he fled out of the auditorium, away from the mocking, terrible shades.

THE SOURCE OF DEFOE.

BY A. E. SNODGRASS.

BUT for William Dampier the world might never have known *Robinson Crusoe*. His *Voyages* were to Daniel Defoe what Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Plutarch's *Lives* were to Shakespeare, or Widmann's sixteenth-century history of Dr. Johannes Faustus was to Goethe—teeming sources of inspiration.

This redounds supremely to Dampier's credit, for we could as lief spare Cinderella as Crusoe. Dr. Johnson would have it that the book was one of three which readers wished longer.

On the other side of the scales, however, the famous navigator fails to balance, for, through a disgruntled crew and his own lack of doggedness, he postponed the civilisation of Australia for half a century. He failed to grasp the prize when it was within his reach; yea, he actually saw the promised land and skirted its shores, only to scorn and reject it, and sail away a forlorn and beaten would-be conqueror.

Nevertheless, despite his weaknesses and failures, he was a highly remarkable man, this Dampier. His portrait in the National Portrait Gallery, painted by Thomas Murray at the instance of Sir Hans Sloane, is quite eloquent to the student of physiognomy, who sees delineated the imaginative powers of a Hamlet, the same dreaminess, melancholy, irresolution. A man who would let 'I cannot' wait upon 'I could,' hesitancy hinder purpose, obstacles trip up resolve;

a temperamental inability to take the tide of affairs at the flood which leads on to fortune.

Daring he had and hardship never daunted him, but half-heartedness and despondency always crippled his enterprises. His voyages round the world, when much of it was still a veiled mystery, gave him a sea knowledge unsurpassed by contemporary mariners. He was the finest sailor of his day, the best hydrographer and geographer, and his travels are to this hour, as Clark Russell, no mean authority, attests, 'foremost among the best-written and most interesting in the language.' One biographer indeed has held these books to be 'almost classical' in their illuminating portrayal of natural phenomena. But methinks 'tis better not to express too much.

Defoe was swift to perceive the literary and untrammelled qualities of this seaman, and he made good use of his discernment. Whether he actually met Dampier is in doubt and is of no consequence, but that he found matter in the mariner's tales of the sea and of strange lands afar to quicken his more gifted and decorative pen is revealed in the nautical passages in *Colonel Jack*, *Roxana*, *Moll Flanders*, *Captain Singleton*, and *Robinson Crusoe*.

One example may suffice. In the narrative of his first voyage round the world (1681-91) Dampier tells how in May, 1688, he was tempest-tossed in a canoe with eight men off the islands of Nicobar, north of Sumatra. If this extract does not read like an excerpt from *Robinson Crusoe* then there are no resemblances in literature.

'The evening of this 18th day was very dismal,' Dampier writes. 'The sky looked very black, being covered with dark clouds, the wind blew hard, and the seas ran high. The sea was already roaring in a white foam about us; a dark night coming on, and no land in sight to shelter

us, and our little ark in danger to be swallowed by every wave ; and, what was worst of all, none of us thought ourselves prepared for another world. The reader may better guess than I can express the confusion that we were all in. I had been in many eminent dangers before now, but the worst of them all was but a play-game in comparison with this.

‘ I must confess that I was in great conflicts of mind at this time. Other dangers came not upon me with such a leisurely and dreadful solemnity. A sudden skirmish or engagement, or so, was nothing when one’s blood was up, and pushed forward with eager expectations. But here I had a lingering view of approaching death, and little or no hopes of escaping it ; and I must confess that my courage, which I had hitherto kept up, failed me here ; and I made very sad reflections on my former life, and looked back with horror and detestation on actions which before I disliked, but now I trembled at the remembrance of.

‘ I had long before this repented me of that roving course of my life, but never with such concern as now. I did also call to mind the many miraculous acts of God’s providence towards me in the whole course of my life, of which kind I believe few men have met with the like. For all these I returned thanks in a peculiar manner, and this once more desired God’s assistance, and composed my mind, as well as I could, in the hopes of it, and, as the event shewed, I was not disappointed of my hopes.’

The popular idea is that Defoe was beholden to Alexander Selkirk for the basic conception of Robinson Crusoe, and the notion is not erroneous ; but that does not discount his debt to Dampier, apart from the descriptive cues in the *Voyages*, for it was Dampier who discovered Selkirk on the island of Juan Fernandez and who brought him home to England for his adventure to be publicly talked about and marvelled at.

The finding of Selkirk occurred during Dampier's last journey across the oceans with Captain Woodes Rogers. Two privateers, the *Duke* and the *Duchess*, had been commissioned. The *Duke* was a vessel of 300 tons, carrying 30 guns and 170 men; the *Duchess* was 270 tons, had 26 guns, and 151 men were aboard.

The ships were financed by a number of speculative Bristol merchants under the ægis of Prince George of Denmark, Lord High Admiral, and were planned to cruise on the coasts of Peru and Mexico against the Queen's enemies, the French and the Spaniards. Everything was arranged in fine style, and a man-of-war, the *Hastings*, was allotted as convoy. Rogers held the chief command, Dampier being appointed pilot, a post in this instance of real distinction and authority and one which a man even of Dampier's pre-eminence as a world navigator could accept without any loss of dignity.

The voyage, begun in 1708 and ended in 1711, was as successful as it was romantic and eventful. The privateers returned with booty to the net value of £170,000. There were many eager hands to share in these profits, and what Dampier secured of the plunder, if anything, history does not disclose. The chief interest, however, is the connection with Selkirk.

Alexander Selkirk, or Selcraig, had been a wild lad, hailing from the Fifeshire village of Largo, who very early in life became fascinated by the sea. He disappeared for six years with some buccaneering gang, and then showed himself at his home only for a brief spell ere he was off again, this time with Dampier, who was making in the *St. George* his third long voyage (1703-7).

Selkirk was mate of the *Cinque Ports* which accompanied the *St. George*. Off the island of Juan Fernandez trouble

arose on the *Cinque Ports*. Selkirk was not the most amicable of seamen, and his captain, Stradling, was a corsair of the ferocious kidney that breeds mutiny out of tyranny. Violent scenes resulted in Selkirk electing to go ashore, and he and his effects were duly landed on the uninhabited island.

But while the boat was returning to the ship panic suddenly took hold of Selkirk. An hysterical dread of prospective loneliness overwhelmed him. He dashed into the surf and, with outstretched arms, implored to be taken aboard again. Stradling only laughed and the crew jeered—so Crusoe was born.

How he made shift for himself, 'the monarch of all he surveyed,' for four years and four months became a matter of combined fact and fiction. Woodes Rogers and Dampier in the *Duke* and the *Duchess* liberated him in 1709, and later he was given the command of a ship captured as a prize.

So luck was in his fated path, for the *Cinque Ports*, from which he was marooned, sank with nearly all hands off the American coast.

Back in England, Selkirk was accounted a hero. It is said that Defoe went to Bristol to interview him at the house there of Mrs. Damaris Daniel in St. James's Square. Steele certainly encountered him and filled a whole number of *The Englishman*, one of his many journalistic bantlings, with an account of the castaway's adventures. *Robinson Crusoe*, the outstanding work that sprang jointly from the tales of Dampier and of Selkirk and by the magic of Defoe's genius obscured them, was published in 1719.

It is not surprising that Dampier's published narratives of his voyages which put a girdle round the earth attracted the keen attention of such an eagle-eyed and prolific writer as Defoe. They are not only remarkable inherently but in the sense that seafaring and literary skill are the rarest of

allies. Born in 1652 at East Coker, near Yeovil in Somersetshire, Dampier, the son of a tenant farmer who died when William was ten years old, had but meagre educational grounding and he was barely seventeen when he was sailing to France and Newfoundland. His roving spirit, leading him into such an uneasy life, seems the antithesis of a temperament that could exert so illustrative and polished a pen. When he was not battling with the ardours of an existence before the mast, he was fighting in the Dutch War on board the *Royal Prince*, commanded by Sir Edward Sprague. He took part in two engagements and then fell sick and lingered near death's door for a long period. After recovery the sea summoned him again with insistent voice. He went to Jamaica to manage an estate, and next engaged himself as a common workman cutting logwood. Logwood was then a fresh discovery and its high value as a dye-wood made the trade a very profitable one. Logwood was worth £15 a ton.

Dampier had no qualms in joining the freebooters. He spent ten years in their turbulent company. He was, however, a poor buccaneer. Piracy was not to his taste. He was only a half-hearted villain and he never entered into the more brutal phases of the life of the sea-hawks. He often expressed abhorrence of the men with whom he associated, though it cannot be accounted to his grace that he was not averse to sharing in the plunder that accrued.

He was a born strolling philosopher, a close observer and lover of Nature, a man, as Coleridge says, of 'exquisite refinement of mind.' What a bundle indeed of deep-seated contradictions! He wrote his books amid the drunken turmoil of his shipmates, describing with artistic and meticulous detail some rare tree, plant, exquisite flower, or curious fish between the sacking of a village and the looting

of a wine shop. Did he ever pass an hour without fetching out his precious notebook? The wonder is that he ever wrote a line. Life aboard ship with a tribe of savage, dissolute, untamed buccaneers must often have been very akin to hell let loose.

*'Fifteen men on a dead man's chest,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!'*

His failure effectually to discover the great continent of Australia is another chapter in a wild and varied career which was always so near and yet so far from supreme achievement. He reached Australia in the *Roebuck*, and territory there on the north-western seaboard is called after him, but he bit only on the hard, uncouth rind of the fruit, and left the juice and the richness thereof untasted and untouched.

This voyage in his Majesty's ship *Roebuck* began in 1699 under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke, Lord High Admiral, the Earl of Orford, one of the principal Lords of the Admiralty, and many other exalted persons. The launching of the enterprise proves the high esteem which attached to Dampier in consequence of his first voyage round the world. His aim now was to explore the mysteries of Terra Australis, only a corner of which was then known to the civilised world as New Holland. Evidently he had few doubts about the wonderful possibilities of this uncharted region. He had already written: 'New Holland is a very large tract of land. It is not yet determined whether it is an island or a main continent; but I am certain that it joins neither to Asia, Africa, nor America. This part of it we saw is all low even land with sandy banks against the sea.'

Originally he had intended to point the *Roebuck* westwards by Cape Horn, and if he had adhered to this scheme he would in all likelihood have struck the eastern coast of Australia and pre-dated the discoveries that came later to the hand and helm of Captain James Cook.

The stars ruled otherwise. He had vivid memories of the cold of Tierra del Fuego, and in a weak, halting moment he chose to voyage to New Holland by way of the Cape of Good Hope. Whatever good hopes he had of momentous revelations this decision completely shattered them. He roamed unavailing for weeks the inhospitable shores of north-western Australia, and saw nothing save arid territory, until at last, disappointed and disconsolate, with a crew stricken with scurvy, he turned his back on El Dorado and steered for New Guinea with the flag of 'Failure' at his masthead. His theories were sound enough, but we had to wait for Cook to confirm and consolidate them.

The voyage of the *Roebuck*, inaugurated with such trumpeting, to which Pepys and John Evelyn added their bugle notes, terminated in a blank sheet of accomplishment. The *Roebuck* itself foundered off the island of Ascension and the castaways were brought home in English men-of-war.

Dampier was very conscious of his defeated purpose, and writing of it he pleaded in extenuation that 'proper judges of these sort of performances will allow that I have delivered many things new in themselves, capable of affording much instruction to such as meditate future discoveries, and which in other respects may be of great utility to the present age and to posterity.'

The last days of Dampier were spent on shore, probably in a minor position in the Customs. He died in London, aged 63, in March, 1715. His will, dated November 29, 1714, describes him as 'diseased and weak of body' but of

‘sound and perfect mind.’ Nine-tenths of his property went to his cousin, Grace Mercer, of London, spinster; the remainder to his ‘Brother, George Dampier, of Porton, near Breadport, Dorset, gentleman.’ The will is preserved at Somerset House, but the value of the property is not stated.

Those best qualified to judge have extolled William Dampier as the ‘Cook of his age.’ Nelson and Horne gave high commendation to his volumes, and Admiral Burney, one of Cook’s shipmates, declared that ‘it is not easy to name another voyager or traveller who has given more useful information to the world in a style perfectly unassuming and free from the most distant appearance of invention.’

Yet as an explorer posterity finds him wanting. His pulse beat too hotly at the start of his expeditions and too languidly towards the end. He was too contemplative to be bold. But he was an Englishman with many of the sterling qualities the designation implies, and, strange to say, the French, the Dutch, and even the Spaniards have deemed that his own country has scarcely done him justice.

The world, however, can forgive him all his shortcomings if so be his writings prompted Defoe to give us *Robinson Crusoe*.

EYES UNTO THE HILLS.

BY HUGH IRELAND.

I.

THE Stelvio, which has enjoyed the prestige and romance of the highest pass in Europe until the opening of the Col de l'Iséran in the French Alps last autumn, has long exercised a peculiar fascination upon my mind. The melody of its name, the grandeur of its surroundings, the audacity of its conception and the distinction of its altitude have combined to give it a charm of its own. And I have recognised, without thoroughly analysing, the drama which is inherent in its approach from the north.

But it was not until a few days ago, when I sat at the feet of a master metaphysician, that the full significance of that drama flashed into my understanding. I should like to offer to share it with you, for if you have not already seen it (with your spiritual as well as your physical eyes) it may give you a permanent addition to your storehouse of ideas. And that is one of the gifts that bless like the quality of mercy.

The talk was about those false mental cul-de-sacs which claim to terrify our mortal minds, and my friend was saying how often we have to take courage to carry on right to the end of them before the outlet can come into view. You know what I mean—the feeling that we have come to the end and that there can be no way out, when in fact we have not come to the end and there is a way out which will appear in its own time. Who was it who said his life had

been a series of disasters none of which had ever happened? His meaning was the same.

At that point in the conversation the memory-picture of the north side of the Stelvio suddenly burst upon me. It came hopping into my mind with the gay assurance of the psalmist's 'little hills,' followed by the realisation that this is indeed one of God's hills in which it pleaseth Him to dwell, and from whence cometh my help. Let me tell you.

There are moments of enchantment when any view looks better than its best, and it was at one such that I was privileged to approach the Stelvio for the first time. We had driven all the way from the far end of Lake Garda under a blazing July sun, and the Venosta valley had been dusty as well as hot. So our spirits seemed almost flagging when we caught our first reviving glimpse of the Ortler's splendid snows, and took our left-hand turning off the main road at Spondigna.

Then it was, with the shadows lengthening towards evening, that the narrow Val di Trafoi cast its magic spell upon us, and we saw what is not to be seen at noonday.

The solemn still pines were whispering together in the mysterious half-lights, though there was neither speech nor language, while the Solda torrent, spuming down beside the road, fresh from the glaciers, so cooled and moistened the air that we could almost hear the drip from the trees of raindrops which had not fallen. Our parched throats felt refreshed, and we seemed to be swimming upstream, like unhurried salmon, through the water-green light of the gorge, which held all the secretive attraction of the half-seen, until the valley suddenly opened out and the trees withdrew themselves up the steep mountain sides on either hand, disclosing a small 'prairie' of beflowered grassy slopes

with Trafoi itself, almost too small to be called a village, lying cosily in the middle.

Seen so, at dusk, with the warm light of summer sunset illuminating its setting of peaks and glaciers, Trafoi forms a picture of transcendent loveliness. I wish you could see it.

To your left, below the downward-sloping alpine pasture, the river has dropped out of sight in the depths of its narrow ravine. Beyond it the pines mount steeply, in tier upon stately tier, until their topmost ranks stand silhouetted against the lower slopes of the Trafoi glacier, which plunges in a graceful sweep to a level lower than that at which you are standing. Behind it rests a great rocky buttress, past which the Ortler glacier projects in a corresponding curve to the very floor of the valley, while high above the trees in the left-hand corner of the picture the summit of the Ortler itself, all covered in immaculate snow, reaches upward in serene splendour to catch the last glow from the west.

At almost equal altitude the skyline of virgin snowfields swings in a great cirque right across the background, in the centre the glorious Madatsch glacier falling in a nearly vertical precipice of ice, whilst to your right this tremendous backcloth is dominated by the dark pyramid of the rocky Madatsch peak, whose lower slopes are cut by the diagonal of the pine-clad side of the valley in the middle distance. Up the grassy foreground leads the road, holding its steady gradient through the little village, until it forms a 'lacet' behind a group of chalets and finally disappears into the pines which come down to meet it from the right.

As your eye sweeps round this pageant of beauty, almost overwhelming in its majesty, yet telling of peace, security and the love of its Creator which you may feel enfolding

you more closely, perhaps, in this remote serenity than in many a temple made with hands, you are left wondering how it can be possible for any carriage-way to climb out of such a colossal cul-de-sac.

But when early bedtime comes in the little hotel you may sleep happy in the clean mountain air because your map assures you that there is a way out which will show itself to-morrow when you have approached more closely. Even so shall I sleep in future, full of gratitude to the mountains, when facing one of those problems in life which only seem to hold no solution because I am not yet near enough to see it. If the climb proves steep that is only to be expected.

Early next day, on that occasion, as though to point the simile still further, the valley was filled with swirling mists ; but the weather-prophets of the village said they would disappear before ten o'clock, and sure enough they did. Once again then I looked at that awe-inspiring semicircle of ten-thousand-foot summits with their reluctant wisps of cloud still clinging here and there, and remembering that the road itself (wherever it might be !) rises to more than nine thousand, I wondered for the last time what could be in store.

In the ' hairpin ' as we left the village I remember dropping down to first gear (it was a small car) and on that we rested content to climb all the fourteen kilometres to the summit, the slow progress imposed by the gradient giving us leisure to admire glimpses of the Ortler through the trees, and the alpine flowers by the way. It was not until half the distance had been traversed through the pines that we suddenly rose clear of the tree-line, and found that we had come round the shoulder to our right at a spot which had not been visible from Trafoi the night before. We had found our way out.

Then at last we could see the road ahead—the classic final ascent to the top of the pass.

The sight fairly took my breath away. As a road the thing is almost unbelievable. The foreshortening of photographs already seen had not prepared me for that astonishing zig-zag which climbs the precipitous-looking rock wall to the very skyline, just to the right of the great Madatsch peak and only a little less high, looking rather like the emergency-stairway clinging to the back of some fantastic skyscraper. One could only marvel at the audacity which had conceived, a century ago, of flinging a carriage road up such a declivity, for the numberless 'lacets' are piled one above another so nearly vertically that great buttresses of masonry have to support almost every corner, and each one is very sharp.

Such was our way. But it is kept in such fine condition, the parapet so clean-cut and substantial, and the width is so reassuring that we felt no vertigo, and the character of the place brings out the best qualities of consideration in every driver.

Up and up we went, stopping to admire the gentians here and there, till Trafoi which had seemed so high after the low roads the day before had been left far below in forgotten depths, and we felt on nodding terms with the peaks on our left, all their ice and snow glittering in the dazzling sunshine. Nearing the summit the way had been cut through great drifts of snow, standing in walls ten and twelve feet high at the corners; and then, suddenly, the gradient ceased and we were at the top.

What a wonderful sensation it is to be there! You can't help glowing with a sense of achievement, until you remember that the credit belongs to those who made the road and built your car. But you may claim the satisfaction of a

splendid experience, and of finding yourself at last on the roof of the world, which cannot fail to make you feel uplifted. The view is open to you all round the compass, downward in every direction save one, and though there may be a few people on skis nearby to make you forget that summer's longest day is already past, you will take the deepest breath you have ever taken in your life, and may even recall with a thrill that perfectly real wild bears were seen up hereabouts not long ago.

To tell of the long descent to Bormio on the other side would risk an anticlimax, for the drama has been played ; but the soldanellas nodding to you on your right would charm your eye again, and a well-named torrent, the Braulio, leaps down beside your road with such gay abandon that you may go forward, when the time comes, still with expectation.

So I will leave you at the summit ; and next time I am facing a mental cul-de-sac I shall think again of Trafoi with its hidden outlet, and draw strength from the Stelvio. It has given me a new key to the psalmist's meaning. May the idea help you too.

II.

When I think of hills, picturing to myself, for example, the beauty of those which you may cross on the road from Rabat to Meknes in Morocco when they are wearing their April mantle of wild flowers which excel our choicest garden blooms and present a pageant of loveliness almost incredible, I feel compelled to question whether it is merely a form of mental greediness that still makes me love the mountains more. Is it just the childish desire for the biggest chocolate in the box ? Trying to be honest I refute this self-accu-

sation, and maintain the justice of my greater love. For what might not the psalmist have said if he had seen the Alps? It is not only that unattainable peaks symbolise all our elusive aspirations—the great picture of the artist's dream that will never quite come down to canvas, the poem which seems to evade the grasp of mere words, the melody which can only haunt some inner consciousness. That alone is a gift beyond the hills' capacity. But there is something more ; it is that the mountains compel respect. They refuse to accept excuses. And so reverence, an essential part of love, is added to tip the scale.

A friend used to say to me : 'Never make excuses.' He himself lived up to his motto, for at the head of a great commercial enterprise in a 'far-flung outpost of Empire' he would act on his own decisions and only ask head-office approval when the fun was all over. He never prolonged it by excuses even if the event appeared to call for them. But such hardihood will not work with mountains. If you make a mistake you must pay for it on the nail, nine times out of ten.

The tenth, I suspect, occurred to me on the Izoard Pass some years ago. To this day my memory smarts under the accusation of a French omnibus driver who told me loudly and clearly, before about twenty people, that I did not know how to drive in the mountains. At the time, with indignation white hot, it never entered my head that any blame could attach to me. But as the seasons have gone by, and such a lovely stock of fresh experiences has been added to the Alpine and other sections of my mental storehouse, a tiny doubt, like a worm i' the bud, has crept into the picture to ask if the busman, in fact, were not right and I wrong. If so, the mountains let me off, and I owe them a debt of deepest gratitude. Can I state the case impartially?

We had been enjoying a short stay at La Grave, near the top of the Col du Lautaret, after a glorious drive from greedy Belley by way of the Col du Chat and Lac Bourget, over the three passes of the Chartreuse, and up the lovely Romanche valley from Grenoble. I hope you know La Grave, for I should take so long telling you about it that there would be no time left for the Izoard. It was my first love thirty years ago, and no Alpine village has ever displaced it in my affection.

We had been very happy there, revelling in the air and the view, finding edelweiss on the lower slopes of the majestic Meije, and watching alpinists and avalanches from Les Terrasses, until our last day came and we gave ourselves the treat of driving to the summit of the Galibier, second in altitude at that time only to the Stelvio itself. The historic old road was unchallenged then, and the experience was one to tempt any pen, but that again is not the tale I am trying to tell.

It was on the descent, when we reversed our tracks, that the chill of fear first clutched at our hearts, for we suddenly came upon the scene of an accident that had occurred only a few moments earlier. A powerful touring car, the latest darling of a famous factory, in the skilled hands of its tester, had cut things too fine in passing a lorry on the narrow road with its friable unprotected edge, and plunged down the mountain-side, which took no excuses. Astonishingly, driver and mechanic had escaped unscathed; nor did the proud machine lying twisted on the rocks below present such a grim spectacle as the blood and broken glass of a collision on the fast level, but it gave us, as our chauffeur would have said if we had had one, a turn.

So it was in somewhat chastened mood, with a fresh reminder of the dangers of our favourite game, that we ran

over the Lautaret again the next morning on our southward way, pausing to notice that the wreck still lay high to our left on the flank of the Galibier, awaiting rescue. How brave we all pretended to be ! But in truth we were nervous about the Izoard, having heard awe-inspiring accounts of its precipices, and a secret anxiety was gnawing at my mind lest, for once, vertigo might attack me whilst driving.

The Izoard climb starts with an unpretentious turn in the streets of Briançon, and as we rose above the forts the ravine on our right soon assumed a dark profundity as of the bottomless pit. But our road carried on straightforwardly on the higher ground over a number of kilometres of steady gradient until suddenly, in a tiny village, it took a sharp turn to the right, up a steep, narrow, dirty street. Then, after a few hundred yards of stiff collar-work under the broiling August sun, the air began to freshen, and we found ourselves ascending a smiling pastoral upper valley whose end appeared to be closed by a tree-curtained precipice.

How well I remember the fragrance of those pines as we entered their welcome shade and found our road zigzagging up what was not quite a precipice after all, but an ideal picnic place, all green grass, lichenized rocks, yellow alpines and cool vistas.

The top of the pass, close upon eight thousand feet above sea-level (there are not many higher in Europe), rises clear of the trees, and is approached from this north side by a comfortable grassy slope with rock peaks on either hand, and a refuge in the middle. Napoleon himself made provision in his will for its building, with others on the great roads which his vision had created. So our long second-speed climb ended peacefully, and we congratulated ourselves on having found nothing alarming in it, but rather

the undiluted joy of a clean ascent by pleasant paths to the gateway of a new world.

We jumped out of the car to look back at the way we had come, and what a magnificent prospect it is ! No lesser adjective can do it justice. Below you the road twists and turns like a white snake, seeking the easiest course up the rolling slopes of the plateau which is bounded by the blue depths of the valley, whilst in the distance range upon range of the great peaks of Dauphiné are sketched round the horizon with all the delicacy of pastel.

Then comes that thrilling moment, renewed at the top of every pass and constituting so much of its charm, when you turn again and look forward, to see, at last, what is on the other side. For in the very nature of things these high watersheds mark immemorial distinctions between one valley and another which even modern transport is slow to smooth out, and in the case of those whose roads run north and south there is the added contrast furnished by nature itself, for the shady side is green and moist and brightened by warm-coloured flowers, like the dryas and alpine rose, whilst the other, more arid at the higher altitudes, is relieved by the cool touch of campanulas, violas and gentians on its sun-baked slopes. Would that a modern psalmist would sing of the alpine flowers ! Surely they are more lovely than those of the hills ?

Looking south from the Izoard summit you realise how high you are standing, for you see the gradual fall of the ranges away from the giant peaks at your back. The secluded Queyras valley (another favourite of mine) which marks the foot of the pass is too far below you to be visible. You look clean over everything to Monte Viso in Italy as you fill your lungs with the sparkling air which always seems to be moving gently at that enchanted spot where the road,

for a moment, is level. How joyfully we drank it all in !

But scarcely had we started the descent than all our dark forebodings of the morning came fluttering back like ill-omened bats, for we suddenly saw, rough-lettered in red on a piece of board stuck in a cranny of the rock by the roadside, the fateful words : ' Fièvre Aphteuse.' They laid a chill hand on our happy hearts, though their meaning was obscure to us. It seemed unpleasantly evident that some epidemic must be raging in the valleys below, and that we were warned to turn back. There was nobody to ask, for we had the whole visible world to ourselves. But illness was inconceivable at our pure altitude, and to turn back the last thing we wished, so we carried on, hoping for the best.

Nerves, however, were keyed up again, and the Casse Déserte did nothing to relieve the tension. For there is something weird about that tremendous scree which we soon had to cross. Its angle is so steep that the great mass of loose stones has the appearance of sliding downwards, piling itself against the backs of the strangely shaped rocks which project like tortured logs in a cataract. The natives call them ' Gendarmes,' but they look more like hobgoblins. Our road, narrow and innocent of parapet, seemed no more than a casual scratch across this insecure incline, and we held our breath until we were safely over, feeling that if anyone sneezed the whole mountain might start to slide down upon us. Indeed, so fantastic is the spot that the next time I crossed it I stopped the car half-way and stepped out, to assure myself by the feel of the solid ground, and by picking gentians, that the whole thing was not a nightmare. It was only thus that my fear of the place was finally exorcised.

Picture then the further shock to our rapidly vibrating systems when we found ourselves confronted, just round the

second blind corner, by an ancient char-a-banc, functioning uncertainly on some local service, crowded with peasantry, struggling upwards with steaming radiator, and apparently occupying the entire width of the road.

It was the last thing we had expected, for we had been assured in advance that we would not meet an 'Autocar' on the narrow part of the road at that time of day.

Pulling up instantly I signalled the disreputable old vehicle to stop and let me reverse up the gradient to a 'garage,' as the wider passing-places are called, to allow it to go by. But to my horror the driver of the juggernaut, evidently afraid that if he once stopped he might never succeed in restarting, kept relentlessly on without giving me a chance to carry out my charitable intention. Or was it simply that it did not occur to him that a foreign amateur was really proposing to reverse a hundred yards on such a road? Anyhow, in the twinkling of an eye he was upon us.

Realising his fell determination I edged to the last inch against the vertical rock wall on my right (having, by the mercy of Providence, the inner berth) and sat tight, hoping against the evidence of my eyes that he could clear us.

An instant later, as his front axle drew level with ours he yelled: 'Avancez!' He must have thought it possible for the two machines to pass on that narrow ledge by means of some kind of waltzing half-turn. But that was precisely what I was unwilling to risk, knowing full well that if his back axle touched mine the result would be disastrous to our relative fragility. So I remained where I was with beating heart, while the great coach, its every passenger screaming in terror, shied back from the extreme edge where the mountain side fell away at a vertiginous angle, and crunched into the side of our car.

Thank God they had not gone over! But there we were,

tightly wedged together on the verge of a precipice, miles from help, and more than seven thousand feet up one of the stiffest and wildest passes in Europe.

Something had to be done about it, and the first difficulty was to get out of our car, for with the jagged rock-wall on our right and the towering coach on our left we might as well have been in a crevasse. Ultimately I clambered out over the windscreen and bonnet, with such lack of dignity that the driver of the decrepit bus, feeling public opinion behind him, elected to become abusive and blame me (as I have said) for his predicament, which seemed to me unjust. Ignoring him, however, my first action was to scotch the char-a-banc with a large rock, for its whole weight appeared to be resting on my steering-gear. It had wedged itself somehow behind my left front wheel, and the full strain was passing through the steering tie-rod to the other front wheel which was butting solidly against the unmoved mountain.

This first tension relaxed, the next business was to persuade my friend the enemy that it would be more expedient to get ourselves out of the mess than to argue about how it had happened. He agreed in time, his passengers veering to my side of the argument, and after half an hour's co-operation we succeeded in extricating our machines from their reluctant embrace, which might have reminded a disinterested onlooker of that embarrassing dance known as the Paul Jones.

Our back axle and steering gear were intact, and with no further damage than the crushed running-board and back wing I heaved a sigh of relief. The bus-passengers showed a marked reluctance to continue their journey, but as they had remained petrified in their seats after the first shock, the driver had the whip hand and gave them no choice.

We for our part felt the utmost willingness to leave that grim scene.

But we were not allowed to relax for long. Hardly had we drawn breath before we came upon another of those ominous red notices about the 'Fièvre Apteuse,' which we had forgotten in the stress of more imminent dangers. Fearing the worst now, but more than ever determined not to turn back, we crept on for another ten kilometres or so, winding our way slowly down through the beautiful deserted upper valleys, and it was not until we reached the first outpost of some sort of civilisation, with evening drawing on, that we encountered a strange-looking, dirty little man by the roadside. Him we accosted, begging brokenly for an interpretation of the fever notices.

To our chagrin the unattractive creature immediately burst into uproarious laughter, which so doubled up his already bent back that it was some moments before he could stammer, with a queer local accent and outstretched finger ridiculing our long white faces :

'Ça c'est une maladie des bestiaux ! Pas des gens !'

So at last it dawned upon us that the thing must be foot-and-mouth disease, and we too were able to laugh, for the first time that afternoon. It did us good.

In fairness to the Izoard I would like to admit that these experiences were solely the result of our own mis-thinking, for I have been over it twice since, and I love it. It is one of the most romantic and inspiring of all the passes of the Alps, best seen in the other direction, from south to north, and you should not miss it on any account.

Honesty also compels the further admission that I can see, now, that even in that remote spot I ought to have risked my axle in order to reduce the risk which the bus-driver's apparently rash manœuvre entailed for his passengers. The

fact that my own intention had offered the less spectacular but safer solution had evidently made me stubborn. It is so easy to resent being run into when one's own car is at a standstill and the other driver could well stop if he would. But the mountains have helped me to learn that resentment is never justifiable, for what would my British unwillingness to be bullied have availed my heart if the coach-load of innocent French peasants had been hurled to their deaths ?

That is why I remain reverently grateful to my mountains. It seems clear now that they forgave me a moment's selfishness that day, and were generous to us all.

MAN OVERBOARD !

BY CHARLES KENNETT.

THE winter was at its height, and, loaded only with ballast the *Dollar Princess* was high in the water. The Western Ocean behaved itself for the first ten days, but, when nearing approximately 30° West, she encountered one of the worst gales the North Atlantic had to show. She was shipping seas clean over the bows. The *Princess* took one sea slap on her fo'c'sle-head. The helmsman held her head on to the giant combers. Occasionally, above the shrieking of the wind in the stays and rigging, could be heard the hiss of the combers. The skipper and the first and second mates were in the wheelhouse beside the helmsman. Suddenly the first mate shouted.

‘ Duck ! ’

Ahead was a wall of green. There was a rending crash as the windows of the wheel-house gave before that tremendous inrush of water and the wheel-house was filled with three feet of swirling, rushing sea.

She seemed to be going down and down. The engines throbbed madly and then stopped. The binnacle and telamotor gear had saved the helmsman from flying glass, but the three officers were all slightly cut about the face and hands.

The Captain, grasping the engine-room telegraph, asked what the matter was down below. As he spoke the engines throbbed once more to life, and the *Princess*, with a final wriggle of her whole frame, met the next comber with a proud uplift of her forefoot.

Through the howling of the gale it had been impossible to hear anything of what was happening on deck. The wings of the bridge were untenable, and the second mate, who was actually on watch, had had to take cover in the wheel-house with the Captain and first mate.

The water swirled out of the wheel-house, leaving a bare six inches covering the floor, when a white faced bos'n with streaming oilskins, burst in to say that two of the relieving watch, in making their way from the quarters aft to the wheel-house, had, in spite of the life-line rigged from stern to amidships, been swept overboard into the raging Atlantic.

The gale was blowing, according to the Captain's estimate, at about seventy miles per hour, but two men were lying astern perhaps with life left in them, and the *Dollar Princess* had to be turned. Taking firm grip of the binnacle, the Captain gave the order.

'Hard to starboard.'

'Hard a' starboard it is, sir, and steady as she goes,' repeated the helmsman, putting the wheel hard over.

The formula he used was far from being applicable to the movements of the *Princess*, as she slowly swung away from the gale and the full force of the wind struck her broadside on. She heeled over until, high as her rails were through being in ballast, her starboard rails touched the water. Anxiously the skipper looked at the pendulum in the chart-room through the aperture just behind the helmsman's head. Would she hold or would she go? The ship was leaning over at an angle of 60 degrees, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the helmsman kept his hands on the spokes of the wheel. Slowly she came round. 'Ease her helm,' said the skipper. The helmsman eased 15 degrees.

'Hard aport.'

‘Hard aport it is, sir, steady as she goes.’

Suddenly the wind was on the quarter, and the following seas behind smashed on the poop. The *Princess* was round. Now to look for the two unfortunates that had been left about two miles astern. All around were the white crests of the huge combers. Every man on the ship was warned by the bos’n to get up into the rigging and any other vantage-point and scour the seas. All the ship’s officers with their binoculars searched. It seemed impossible in that angry sea, even if they were sighted, for them to be rescued. Suddenly Chips, who had scrambled well above the crow’s nest, was seen gesticulating wildly. Was it possible that any man could live in that raging sea? It was quite impossible to hear what Chips was shouting in that howling gale, but the first mate, fighting his way down the ladder from the bridge, climbed up beside the bos’n, foot by foot. Watching the sea with his binoculars, he perceived one of the two men who had been swept overboard, riding the crests of the waves. With the bos’n gripping his waist he semaphored orders to the bridge.

‘North, Twenty West,’ said the skipper.

‘North, Twenty West,’ chanted the helmsman, omitting the ‘sir’ in the excitement of the moment.

Once more the *Princess* paid into wind, and heeling over at a drunken angle with the engines going full steam ahead, one moment out of the water, the next fully submerged, she staggered drunkenly to the spot.

The second mate, going out to the end of the bridge, kept an eye on the sea. Suddenly he held up his hand, and with the other released a lifebelt and sent it hissing into the sea. It burned a bright flame. Could the man reach it? He was obviously in an exhausted condition. Occasionally he rose on the crest of a roller. A cheer which

came from all throats, reached the bridge, as he was seen to struggle into the belt. He was safe for the time being, providing the numbing cold of the Western Ocean did not put an end to his battle for life.

It seemed impossible to lower a boat in that awful tempest, but the Captain, going to the end of the bridge, beckoned all hands to come to the Captain's quarters, and when he called for volunteers to man one of the boats, there was not a man of the forty-eight-odd on board, even including the ship's cook, who did not clamour to go. A conference between the Captain and the Chief Engineer resulted in a pipe being run out from the fuel which was carried, and oil was soon pouring on the sea. It had the effect of breaking down the foamy crests, which every now and then enveloped, the man in the lifebelt.

Then came the lowering of the boat. Every man was equipped with a life-line, which he was to cast off as soon as the boat hit the water. The first boat down, which was being carefully lowered on the leeward side, was smashed to atoms as the *Princess* gave a sickening lurch. Twelve men were struggling in the water, liable to be dashed to pieces against the steel plates of the ship's side. They were hauled to safety by their comrades by means of the life-lines attached to them, but three of them were badly bruised.

Another boat was got ready and this time, with the Captain on the end of the bridge watching the slow descent ; inch by inch she was lowered, while the crew staved her off from the rolling side. She was barely two feet from the water when the Captain gave the signal to clear the falls, and she hit the water. At the same time he rang the engine telegraph 'full speed ahead,' and with orders to the helmsman 'Hard a' starboard,' she slowly swung round, and protected the lifeboat as far as possible from the full

fury of the gale. Could she live in that sea? It seemed an impossibility and yet slowly, with the men straining at the oars, she cleared the intervening seven hundred yards from where the sailor was still bravely battling. It was with relief the crew saw two men lean over the side of the lifeboat and haul the practically unconscious sailor—who had been in the water nearly two hours—back once more to comparative safety.

Then came the job of getting the boat aboard. It seemed an impossible task, and after various fruitless attempts, it was decided to let the boat go and save the lives of the men in it. One by one, as she swung perilously close to the plunging and rolling *Princess*, the men grasped the life-lines thrown to them, and though battered against the side, they were hauled once more on deck. The boat carried no doctor, but the skipper soon had the rescued man between blankets, and after some hot brandy he opened his eyes.

As soon as the ship was once more pointed full into the gale, the wind and storm, having done its worst, began to quieten. With the flag at half-mast, one remaining lifeboat, with the wheel-house wrecked, the pipes to the winches twisted and wrenched from their steel plates from the force of the gale and the heavy seas, the *Dollar Princess* limped into Cork Harbour.

BY THE WAY.

“ROLL up the map of Europe !” So said the dying Pitt ; let none forget the inevitable, ultimate sequel—St. Helena.

★ ★ ★

The principal difficulty of any monthly commentator in these feverish days is not to find subjects upon which to comment, but to find some that will not have undergone a complete transformation between the date when he pens his observations and the date when they appear in print. There was a time when England was little affected by the views, and still less by the words, of others : she went her way serene in the possession of her stable soul. That time has passed—it may be, only for a while : all through the chequered story of the recent past, her ear has been unusually lent to the orations of the Continent, and in the process she has been besought by her advisers and mentors to ‘keep calm.’ Does she ever do anything else ? Mark Twain in one of his humorous articles describes how a tyro edited an agricultural paper and amongst other paragraphs inserted one telling those whose clams were excitable to play music to them : it was a saddened, yet friendly, critic who informed him that the injunction was superfluous. The English never have been clams and are not now : but this they have in common with that bivalve—they do not need either music or adjurations to impress upon them the virtues of serenity ; their failing is the converse—they (sometimes) need a big sharp pin to galvanize them into activity. That, let it be hoped, they have had now in sufficiency—and so an end to these anxious ear-strainings to our Continental actor-managers.

★ ★ ★

And all the more may that now be so : March has seen many changes. The perplexing and tragic history of the Spanish war is virtually, if not entirely, at an end and though it is no doubt true that for two years at least that unhappy country has been the scene of an international war at all events it has not spread and now seems but little likely so to do. It may be ironic that the Nationalist leader has won by the aid of enforced foreign fighters, so much so that it was said—in jest, but how pointed !—that on entering one of his camps his first question was ‘ is there anyone here who can speak Spanish ? ’, but the long history of Spain can give no encouragement to any who have planned the continuance of such extraneous elements, and in public affairs gratitude is non-existent. Secondly Pius XI is succeeded by Pius XII, and thirdly—most significantly—with what a difference of note does all the world now speak of English strength ! As to that it need only be said that, in spite of Signor Gayda whose most striking quality is hardly a sense of humour, it means not aggression but exactly the reverse.

★ ★ ★

‘ Hitler on Scapa Flow ’ : we were all cheered to see this announcement on a poster. Unfortunately he did not stay there.

★ ★ ★

‘ We cannot afford to overthrow the government of China. Bad as it is, anarchy will track its downfall, and the few elements of order which yet remain will be whelmed in a convulsive desolation.’

Japanese, take note—but be not too critical of the wording : the above was not written yesterday, it is the final paragraph of an article in the first issue of the CORNHILL, in January, 1860.

★ ★ ★

So *The Criterion* is dead : perhaps in that one more proof is given that the reading world, in bulk, either does not know the difference between good and bad or does not care. In its place we are to have, from a different origin and under different auspices, a magazine entitled *Poetry*, edited by Tambimuttu and Anthony Dickins ; the latter sounds less exotic than the former, but we are told that both 'are interested only in *achievement* in the mode of expression called poetry' and that 'every form of *honest* thought will be given a clear voice on this poets' platform.' The two words in italics—the Editor's italics, not ours—would seem to rule out a number of those youths whose work is already selected, so we are told, to appear : *achievement* is a big word, *honesty* is not a growth of every mind.

★ ★ ★

The glories of the Whigs are gone—*ehou, fugaces*—indeed, when a man could say, and with all sincerity, that he thought he could 'rub along on £40,000 a year'—but Lord David Cecil has made a brilliant attempt to recapture them in his *The Young Melbourne* (Constable, 10s. n.). Few men, who, after so much had been expected of them, had done so little up to and even well into middle age, can have risen to the highest offices of State in the way of William Lamb, Lord Melbourne—but it is not of his public and late distinction but of his private and youthful experiences that Lord David Cecil writes. And the unusual biographical scheme is most abundantly justified by its interest and charm. Here we have retold, with much new matter and from a new angle, the extraordinary story of William Lamb's wife, Lady Caroline, and Byron—and for once Byron is truthfully represented as he really was : here also we have a picture of life in the great Whig houses as it was at the beginning

of the nineteenth century. This is more than a fresh and attractive picture of bygone ways and of an old and yet ever-new scandal : it is one of the freshest, one of the most attractive biographies in the language. I defy anyone to put it down half-read.

★ ★ ★

Many, however, have been the books on Byron and also on Caroline Lamb. Their number is of course insignificant, and rightly insignificant, compared to those on Shakespeare. With the possible exception of Napoleon, I imagine about no man has a bigger literature gathered, and still the studies come. But hereafter all with a difference. It will be impossible in the future for anyone, from whatsoever angle he may approach the nation's poet, whether from that of biography or of literary criticism, to write without indebtedness, acknowledged or secret, to the late Edgar I. Fripp. The two volumes of his *Shakespeare : Man and Artist* (Oxford University Press, 38s. n.) are more than absorbing, more even than exhaustive—they are definitive. It is stated on the dust-cover—after the manner of publishers—that ‘no lover or student of Shakespeare can afford to be without them’ : and in this instance that statement represents the simple truth. The pages of Mr. Fripp's profound scholarship throw light on every feature and facet of Shakespeare's art and life. They are written moreover with such unusual sanity of judgment : where Shakespeare (like his great predecessor) nodded, the author candidly says so ; none of your uncritical idolatry here—and yet as a result Shakespeare emerges not merely the very great artist the whole world has for so long agreed to think him but also—a matter on which the world has not been quite so unanimous—as a very great man, admirable and lovable even as he was

admired and loved by the friends who knew him in the flesh. Here is an end to the 'dark mistress nonsense': here is our Shakespeare at last, man and artist, and in both England's best. An illuminating, engrossing pair of beautifully and abundantly illustrated volumes, worthy to be read and re-read, to be prized and to be loved.

★ ★ ★

It is always a pleasure in this age of mass-production both of goods and of thought to find a book which declines to be put into a group. Of such is Oliver Warner's *Uncle Lawrence* (Chatto & Windus, 5s. n.): this is a study, most delicately and sympathetically done, of the 'failure' of the family, whom Mr. Warner went to visit in his poverty in a cottage on Pelee, an island towards the western end of Lake Erie. Uncle Lawrence was overjoyed to see his nephew, one of his own blood, a visitor—and Mr. Warner brought new zest to his uncle's life by a gift of spectacles. That really is all: but it is an 'all' of such simplicity and grace as deserved the telling. It puts me in mind of some lines of my own, which appeared in these pages towards the end of 1937:—

*Praise to the lowly and the little known
Who never saw Earth's banners raised on high
As they went by,
Yet kept great store
Of faith, of love, of gladness!*

That, at any rate, is the burden, or rather the beauty, of Mr. Warner's little book.

★ ★ ★

And again, a book makes me record how invariable is the pleasure of meeting the unusual in literature as in life—provided only that it is not as it is now so apt to be, the

incomprehensible, the grotesque or the disgusting. John Pudney's work is none of these three things—though he is sometimes less easily intelligible than at others—but it is invariably unusual. His latest volume is *Uncle Arthur and other Stories* (Longmans, 7s. 6d. n.), and there is none of the nineteen stories in the collection which can be dismissed as usual. The two best, in my opinion, are *Uncle Arthur* and *Ethel and her Engine*, and Mr. Pudney at his best is very good indeed, but in every case he has a touch, and often more than a touch, of the unexpected or of phantasy or of an uncommon insight into the foibles or failings of to-day.

★ ★ ★

Wallace B. Nichols, as readers of CORNHILL—and many others—well know has a pretty taste in historical fiction : his last full-length novel in that vein was concerned with the troublous life of Elizabeth Woodville and all the bitter feuds of the Wars of the Roses ; his new one goes a little further back in English history. *The Dark Ride* (Ward Lock, 7s. 6d. n.), is the account of a secret mission undertaken by one Thomas Cledbury in the early days of the reign of Henry V, in the endeavour so to tie his hands by an English insurrection as to prevent his invasion of France. These were stirring times and Mr. Nichols well succeeds in conveying their uncertainties ; but the story as a whole falls perhaps between two stools—there is too much love-making for the adolescent, too little delineation of character for the adult. A pleasant enough story, well begun and well ended, but hardly equal to Mr. Nichols's admirable best.

G.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 186.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 30th April.

for no lonely bird would sing
 Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
 Nor ——— nor solitary thorn ;

1. O sweetheart ! what is this
 ——— there so cold ?
2. You say there is no substance here,
 ——— great reality above :
 Back from that void I shrink in fear
 And child-like hide myself in love :
3. And the need of a ——— of men for me.
4. O many and many a young girl for me is pining,
 ——— her locks of gold to the cold wind free,
5. Fear ——— not the waves that roll ?
 No : in charmèd bowl we swim.

Answer to Acrostic 184, February number : ' Sleep, *gentle* heavens, before the prow ; Sleep, *gentle* winds, as he sleeps now ' (Tennyson : ' In Memoriam '). 1. Gatherin*G* (Keats : ' To Autumn '). 2. Ern*E* (James Clarence Mangan : ' Dark Rosaleen '). 3. Noo*N* (Browning : ' Thus the Mayne glideth '). 4. Tren*T* (Michael Drayton : ' Sirena '). 5. Lul*L*aby (' A Midsummer Night's Dream '). 6. Ev*E* (Browning : ' In a Gondola ').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Mr. Colleyns, 200 Vaughan Road, Harrow, and Miss Todhunter, Riverdene, Bourne End, Bucks, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MAY 1939.

FRIEND.

BY SIANU.

‘ . . . hanged by the neck until you are dead.’ The Chinese interpreter finished translating the sentence into the native speech of the prisoner in the dock, who smiled in acknowledgment and bowed to the Judge. Two warders stepped forward and led Lee Song to the cells : he had expected the sentence, knowing that the murder he had committed warranted the death penalty. Nevertheless, he considered it a justifiable murder, he could hardly have done otherwise than kill the man who had threatened him and his family with dishonour : no self-respecting Chinaman would have hesitated. Of course it was bad luck, being caught, but the white policemen in Malaya were so clever, especially the detectives—*mata mata glap*—the hidden eyes of the law. Lee Song had nothing but admiration for the way the net had been drawn closer and closer until they arrested him.

At the trial, his guild had seen to it that he was defended by the ablest lawyers, but all to no purpose, he must now bow to fate and go to his death bravely—a credit to the Chinese race. He was told that three weeks would elapse before the sentence was carried out, and that in the meantime he could see members of his family if he so wished. He thanked the officials, gave no trouble to those who guarded him ; he was, in fact, a model prisoner.

But though Lee Song had received his sentence with no display of emotion, one person in court that morning had seemed much distressed. This was a young clergyman who had not long been in Malaya. He was not attached to a

Mission but to one of the English Churches. The rules governing his appointment forbade him to proselytise, but at a social function where many people had been invited to meet one of the dignitaries of his Church, the young priest talked with the doctor and helpers of a Medical Mission, and gladly accepted their invitation to call and see how their work amongst the poorer classes of the native population was progressing. This led to an inspection of a day-school run by two American Missionaries and their wives. Here he was charmed by the scholars, girls of Chinese nationality, bright, intelligent little folk, mostly children of middle-class shopkeepers in the town. Two sisters who talked to him without a trace of shyness struck him as particularly attractive, and on his subsequent visits to the school he always chatted with these two little maidens.

One evening, when taking a short cut from the Street of Shoe-makers to the Basket-makers' quarter, the young clergyman heard shrill voices calling : '*Tuan Padlee, Tuan Padlee !*' (All priests, whatever their denomination, are addressed as Padre, in Malaya.) On turning round he saw his two little friends of the Mission School. They greeted him with joy and led him to a Chinese general store—a miniature '*Universal Providers*'—where they introduced him to their father, the shopkeeper, Lee Song, who at once apologised for the boldness of his offspring and offered a chair and hospitality. He called his son—a lad of sixteen—from the back of the shop, and, after presenting him to the visitor, told of his hopes for the boy's future.

Lee Song was not a wealthy man, according to Chinese standards in Malaya, where the merchant princes lived in luxurious splendour in palatial dwellings on the outskirts of the big towns. He was Straits-born, his grandfather had come down from China and soon after his arrival in Malaya

had earned his living as an itinerant seller of cakes. His 'shop' consisted of two packing-cases depending from each end of a *kandar* stick. The case that hung behind was fitted with the primitive cooking arrangements for baking the cakes shown in the case hanging from the other end of the long flat stick balanced on one shoulder. The portable kitchen and show-case bobbed up and down as the bearer trotted along with that peculiar gait—half walk, half run—of the Chinese hawker. When sufficient had been saved, Lee Song's grandfather had rented a market stall where he cooked and displayed a more varied assortment of dishes dear to the Chinese taste—fried bananas—strips of fat pork—balls of spiced meat on slender bamboo sticks—together with many fearful and strangely coloured drinks.

From these small beginnings, Lee Song's father and grandfather had been able to take a shop; now both were dead and Lee Song carried on the business which provided him with a good income and looked like giving a good return in the future for his son.

After that first chance meeting, the young clergyman often visited the Chinese family at the shop and Lee Song always treated him with the greatest respect. Conversation with the Padre was carried on in a mixture of English and Malay. Lee Song spoke the language of the country in the clipped Chinese fashion, and to it he and his wife added odd English words and phrases they had picked up from the children. This often resulted in a verbal tangle, but the two little daughters of Lee Song could generally unravel it, and the young clergyman began to think he was getting to know this Chinese family really well. He was too new to the East to realise that one may spend a lifetime amongst Chinamen without even scratching the veneer that covers the real man. True—this was Malaya—not China, but though Lee Song,

like his father, was Straits-born and had never been to China, he was as truly Chinese as one who had been born and bred in China. The keeping of festivals—all the ritual regarding ceremonies—and the hundred and one superstitions were rigidly observed ; though Lee Song's address was Malaya, to all intents and purposes he lived in China.

His small daughters took part in the religious services at the Mission School ; they regarded them as part of the curriculum and troubled little about the precepts the teachers tried to impress on their pupils. The Padre often asked questions concerning the religious part of their training ; with inherent courtesy the little girls answered with words they thought would please, they were too young to probe their real feelings in these matters.

The Padre made no attempt to convert this family to his religion, he felt that merely conversing with the children about Bible stories could do no harm, nevertheless he hoped the seeds of his own faith might flourish even in the stony soil of Chinese superstition.

.

Now Lee Song lay under sentence of death, there was no doubt of his guilt, he had in fact admitted it. The Padre attended court day after day as the case progressed and he had been first puzzled, then horrified. Why had Lee Song done this terrible thing ? Strange too, his family seemed to think he had done well—not ill—in committing this murder. Even the Police Commissioner—a man who spoke the same dialect of Chinese as Lee Song, for he had spent many years both in China and Malaya—had said that the crime was inevitable under the circumstances. In his opinion, Lee Song could not have done otherwise than vindicate his honour, but of course the Government could not condone that sort of thing. But then, the Padre and many others considered

the Commissioner of Police a peculiar man ; like many people who take up the study of the Chinese language with avidity, Chinese matters possessed him, and he was dubbed by his compatriots as ' Chinese mad.' These were the old days when there were fewer social distractions and a man often threw himself into the study of language and race with the zeal of an enthusiast.

As the Padre went over the events of the past few days he remembered other remarks made by the Commissioner. When the Padre had expressed his sorrow, referring to the condemned man as ' My friend,' the Commissioner had said :

' You may *think* you are a friend of Lee Song's, but you are just so much a friend as Lee Song allows you to be, in his own mind he probably only tolerates you.' And again :

' Hard luck we had to pull him in ; he knew we should in the long run ; he will give no trouble, a grand funeral is all he wants now.'

On being asked by the Padre if he might visit the prisoner the Commissioner had readily given his consent, ' though,' he said, ' what you and Lee Song will find to talk about I cannot imagine !'

The Padre took full advantage of the permission granted to him and Lee Song was always glad to see him, though the prisoner seemed amused at the Padre's obvious anxiety for one in such a position. Lee Song asserted that he was ready to die, he said he knew he must pay the price for what he had done. The Padre, impressed by this fatalistic attitude, remarked that were he in Lee Song's place he should not feel so calm. Lee Song smiled. ' If fate decrees that you must die, what can do ?' he said, and added : ' What would you do in my place ?'

The Padre tried to explain that he should pray to be for-

given in order that his soul might be saved. He spoke of his belief in a Saviour named Jesus Christ, but his lack of knowledge of native tongues hampered him sorely ; naturally with only a few English words added to his imperfect Malay and his complete ignorance of Chinese he could not hope to express the precise meaning of his faith in the Divine Redeemer of Mankind. The Padre had seen little of life in the raw, throughout his life his training had been largely religious, he was more at home in a world of books than in a world of men, an idealist rather than a realist.

Lee Song asked many questions of the young clergyman in the days that followed, and at the end of the first week after the trial said to him in a mysterious whisper :

‘ You say if you die Jesus Clist save you ? ’—R’s are ever a stumbling block to the Chinese tongue.

‘ I hope so,’ replied the Padre.

‘ Then,’ went on Lee Song excitedly, ‘ if He save *you*, why not He save *me*. I have money, plenty dollars saved for my funeral ! ’

The Padre was shocked—horrified—he really tried to explain that Lee Song must not speak in that way of the Christ, but he only made Lee Song more certain that this Man must be very important and that a lot of money was needed for His services. The Padre was greatly distressed ; he felt that he could not deny that Christ would save the soul of the Chinaman, but how to make him understand that it was the soul he referred to and not the body was beyond his power. To consult with others would mean that he would be accused of trying to convert the prisoner and of that he was not guilty. The more earnest the Padre was, the more sure Lee Song became in his belief that his release could be accomplished. Again and again he returned to the subject until the Padre gave up in despair and tried to change

the conversation. Then towards the end of the second week Lee Song asked a direct question of the Padre. 'When the day comes,' he said, 'will you help me?' and the Padre, thinking that Lee Song would need support on that awful morning, replied, 'Of course I will.'

Lee Song sighed with satisfaction, he had worked things out in his Chinese mind according to Chinese standards, and he concluded the Padre would naturally be reticent about this Friend of his called Jesus Christ, but now that he had the promise of help all would go well, he could arrange about the amount to be paid later on. He thought much of what the Padre had said, he would have liked to know exactly *how* the Padre's Friend proposed to save him. He had heard that in China a substitute could be bought for a substantial sum and the promise of a fine funeral, the exchange being effected on the way to the scaffold, but this was Malaya where things were much more strict. Lee Song smiled as he thought how difficult it would be to bring off a coup like that under the nose of the Commissioner—the *Tuan Besar*—a man not only aware of all that went on in and outside the jail but one who never took bribes, and Lee Song was quite sure a large sum would have to be spent in bribes. So the prisoner thought and wondered, being so much alone his idea of someone rescuing him from his unenviable position was continually with him, and before long he thought of it as a certainty.

At the beginning of the third week Lee Song's wife asked her husband what arrangements she was to make for his funeral.

'Hush!' said her husband. 'Wait till the watchful one gets to the end of the passage.' Together they listened, the sound of the warder's footsteps became fainter, then Lee Song said: 'Say nothing to anyone of this, I may not die,

the Padre has promised to help me, he talks of a Friend of his, I hope He will save me.'

The wife was doubtful. 'Who is this Friend?' she asked. 'No one could possibly get you out of here without the *Tuan Besar* getting to know of it.'

'You will tell no one the name, it is a Man called Jesus Clist. The Padre says if he like me, this Man save *him*, why should He not save *me*?'

'Jesus Clist!' exclaimed the woman. 'I know that Name, the children speak of Him.'

'What do they say of Him?' asked Lee Song eagerly.

The woman thought for a moment, she spent more time with the children than their father did and had picked up more of the phrases used at the Mission School.

'I think He must live at the school,' she said; 'they sing songs about Him.'

'If they sing songs about Him, He must be an important Person,' commented Lee Song.

The woman was of the opinion that He was *very* important, 'I know!' she exclaimed. 'The song says "Jesus Clist is lizzen to-day"'—she had remembered the first line of the Easter hymn.

Lee Song gave a sigh of satisfaction, then there really *was* such a Man as the Padre had described. If only he could get him to say how much money was needed all would be well. Though Lee Song had been resigned to death, it was only natural that he should be pleased to think he was not to die after all.

During the Padre's next visit he was reminded of his promise. 'You will help me?' asked Lee Song once more, and again the Padre gave his word.

'Have you paper?' went on Lee Song, 'and something with which to mark on it?'

‘Yes,’ said the Padre. ‘You wish me to take a message for you?’

‘Yes, yes,’ said Lee Song, and the visitor took a leaf from his pocket-book and handed it to the prisoner together with a pencil. It took the Chinaman some time to trace characters upon the paper with a pencil, used as he was to a brush-pen, but at last it was done. Folding it he wrote an address on the outside. ‘There,’ he said, ‘take that to number *ampat ampat*—four four, in the Street of the Goldsmiths, give it to anyone behind the counter and they will give you a present.’

The Padre was embarrassed, he protested. ‘But I do not want a present.’

Lee Song smiled, the Padre was behaving beautifully, quite according to Chinese standards. ‘I know,’ said Lee Song, ‘but you take that chit, *ev-lee-t’ing* all light now.’

Lee Song was jubilant, he knew that all his own people were searched on entering and leaving the jail, but he guessed rightly that the Padre would not be subjected to an examination.

So, to please Lee Song, the Padre took the chit and later in the day made his way to the Street of the Goldsmiths. Number forty-four was a shop—a jeweller’s—and on handing the chit over the counter the Padre was surprised to find himself treated as an honoured guest. He was taken to a room at the back of the shop, an apartment furnished lavishly, with black-wood chairs beautifully inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and many finely carved stools and tables. He was soon joined by an old Chinaman, who, speaking in Malay, said :

‘You are willing to help our poor friend Lee Song?’

The Padre affirmed that he was willing to do all he could to help his Chinese friend. ‘You are very kind,’ said the

other as he signalled to someone in the shop, adding, 'There is no need for more words.' A Chinaman brought in a cotton bag, and placed it near the old Chinaman, who tapped it and said :

'This contains five hundred, how much more is needed ?'

The Padre stared. 'Five hundred what ?' he asked. The old man smiled as he opened the top of the bag.

'Look,' he said.

The bag was full of silver dollars.¹

The Padre shook his head violently, 'No—no !' he exclaimed, and the Chinaman smiled.

'Not enough ?' he said. 'How much more ?'

The Padre was in deep water ; he guessed this old man, who was addressed as *Towkay* by the other Chinese in the shop, was an important person ; he seemed to take it for granted that the Padre had come for money. Knowing his limitations with regard to language the Padre hesitated, then he decided.

'Give me back the chit,' he said, 'I must consult with my friend.'

The *Towkay* bowed, handed back the note, saying : 'It is well, but do not delay, there is not much time.'

The Padre left the shop, very puzzled as to what the *Towkay* meant. The next day being a Sunday he was on duty most of the day, but he made up his mind to go and consult the Commissioner the very first thing on Monday morning.

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The execution was fixed for Tuesday, and on the Monday morning the Police Commissioner asked his chief clerk :

'What arrangements have Lee Song's people made for his

¹ This was before the days of paper currency in Malaya.

funeral? I suppose the wife wants it to start from here, or is it to go from the shop?’

‘No mention has been made of the funeral, sir.’

‘What!’ exclaimed the Commissioner. ‘Do you mean to tell me that the wife has not asked to have him put in his own coffin?’

‘No, sir, the matter has not been mentioned to anyone.’

‘But this is most extraordinary; what is the meaning of it?’

‘I do not know, sir; it is very peculiar.’

‘Peculiar!’ repeated the Commissioner, ‘it is amazing! I have never known such a thing in a case like this, have you?’

‘No, sir.’

‘What do the warders say?’

‘They say the prisoner talks much with the English Padre, sir.’

The Commissioner smiled and remarked: ‘The Padre can do him no harm.’

‘The Padre is coming into the courtyard now, sir.’

The young clergyman entered the office and, laying the chit on the desk, said: ‘I am in need of your advice. Lee Song gave me that note; he asked me to take it to the Street of Goldsmiths . . .’

‘Wait,’ interpolated the Commissioner, and he dismissed the clerk. ‘Now go on, Padre,’ he said.

‘I presented the chit at the address Lee Song told me to, and they wanted to give me a present of money, which of course I could not accept. As I did not wish to offend anyone I have come to ask you what I had better do about it.’

‘Tell me exactly what happened at the shop.’ The Padre

did so while the Commissioner studied the characters traced by Lee Song on the chit. He looked very grave.

‘You do not know what this chit says?’ he asked.

‘No,’ was the answer.

‘Well, it instructs the Kongsì to pay you any reasonable sum for the help you are about to give him.’

‘But I have done nothing,’ said the Padre, thoroughly mystified.

‘It says nothing of what you *have* done, but of what you are willing to do on the day of execution.’

‘But all I said I would do was that I should be glad to help Lee Song at the last hour!’

‘Sit down and tell me what you and Lee Song have talked about during these days.’

The Padre related the nature of the conversations he had had with the prisoner.

‘H’m, it looks as if he misunderstood you,’ commented the Commissioner; ‘his wife will be here shortly, we may get it out of her, there is something funny going on somewhere.’

‘I assure you . . .’ began the Padre.

‘Oh,’ said the Commissioner, ‘I don’t mean you have done anything you shouldn’t, but here we are within twenty-four hours of this execution and Lee Song has made no preparations for his funeral, which is most extraordinary in the case of a Chinaman.’ The speaker gave orders that Lee Song’s wife was to be brought into the office when she arrived and while they waited for her, the two Europeans discussed the matter, the Padre telling of his difficulties in talking of religious subjects with Lee Song.

Lee Song’s wife was shown in; she smiled and gave the greeting usual in Malaya:

‘*Tabek, Tuan.*’

The Commissioner asked her what arrangements she had made for her husband's funeral; she fidgeted and giggled, remembering her husband's caution not to mention the name of the Padre's Friend. So with a silly smirk she said:

'I not know.'

'But,' went on the Commissioner, 'you know your husband is to die to-morrow.'

Again the same answer: 'I not know.'

'But you *must* know that this is Lee Song's last day on earth. Have you made any preparations for the funeral?'

'No, *Tuan*.'

'Why not?'

The woman looked at the Commissioner and then at the Padre, the two were evidently friends, so it was likely that both were in the plot. She knew little of Government affairs but she heard the talk in the town, and knew that the *Tuan Besar* was called 'the walk-straight *Tuan*.' Still, doubtless he had his price and she felt sure he knew of the plot Lee Song imagined was going forward, *of course* he did, but she must answer with care, so she said:

'*Tuan*, Lee Song say he no die, so no funeral.'

The Commissioner settled himself more firmly in his chair, then he spoke very earnestly, using the Chinese dialect familiar to Lee Song and his wife.

'Listen to me,' he said, 'your husband cannot escape, he dies to-morrow. I say this, and I *know*. Now why has nothing been done about the funeral? You do not wish your husband to be put into a plain coffin such as that we keep for common criminals, do you? Why has no coffin been sent here of the kind usual for a man of Lee Song's standing? I tell you there is no chance of anyone taking his place at the last moment, we keep too good a watch, your husband does not leave this building alive.'

The woman stared at the speaker, wondering what to believe. Would Lee Song's hopes be realised? It would be a terrible thing if he *did* die to-morrow. She looked a bit scared and said in a timid voice :

'Lee Song say Man save him.'

'But who, who can save him now?'

'I not know. Lee Song say Fliend of *Tuan* Padlee,' said the woman, looking at the young clergyman.

'Impossible !' exclaimed the Padre, but the Commissioner persisted in his questioning. 'And do you know the name of this Man?'

'Yes, *Tuan*.'

'Then who is it?'

The woman drew her lips tightly together, then after a pause said : 'Lee Song say no tell.'

The Commissioner was very patient, once more he explained that it was impossible for her husband to escape the gallows and added : 'You *must* tell me the name of this Man. I shall keep you here until you do.'

At this the woman looked frightened. 'If I say, you no tell Lee Song,' she said in English. The Padre, who had not understood the previous bit of Chinese conversation, became alert as the Commissioner assured Lee Song's wife that anything she said would be treated as confidential.

Then suddenly the woman turned to the Padre and said : 'You know, *you* tell.'

The Padre looked blank. 'I don't know what you mean,' he said, but a fear clutched at his heart, he remembered the earlier talks in the prison cell.

'All light,' said the woman. 'I tell.' She leaned over the desk and whispered, 'Lee Song say Man name Jesus Clist save him. He Padlee's Fliend.'

The two Europeans looked at each other. 'Oh, I feared

it,' said the Padre; 'it is my own fault.' But the Commissioner took little notice of the remark; he again spoke seriously to Lee Song's wife in her own tongue. He made her understand at last that it was her husband's soul could be saved, but that nothing could save his life.

That she understood was evident from the distress manifest on her face. She whimpered, wrung her hands in a hopeless gesture and wailed. '*Tuan*, is this true, my man dies to-morrow?'

'Even so,' said the Commissioner, 'at eight o'clock to-morrow, he dies.'

The woman showed signs of hysteria. '*Tuan, Tuan*,' she sobbed, 'he knows not—there is so little time—what can I do?'

'Tell me,' asked the Commissioner, 'the coffin is ready?'

'It has been booked these many years past, *Tuan*, but the coffin-maker lives far out of the town and there are the banner-makers, the mourners, wailers, all to be commanded. Money papers to be bought and men hired to burn them to pay Lee Song's way after death. Food must be cooked to sustain him. I am no longer young, *Tuan*, my son must be at the shop, the two others are too young to help. Oh, woe is me!'

The Commissioner knew that this woman spoke truly; though she was not old according to European standards, yet women age quickly in the East and Lee Song's wife would find it beyond her strength to arrange so much in so short a time. However, he owned one of the few motor-cars in Malaya at that time and this he intended placing at the woman's disposal. Calling his clerk, he gave the order: 'Tell my *sais* to bring the car round and then come up here for instructions.'

Then to Lee Song's wife he said : ' You are not afraid to ride in a motor-car ? '

' Oh no, *Tuan*, it does not harm the *Tuan*, it will not harm me.'

' Very well, then. I suppose you know the way to the coffin-maker's ? '

' Yes, *Tuan*, but there are all the other things. I cannot get round all those shops in the time.'

' There will be no need for you to do so,' was the answer.

The *sais* entered and the Commissioner said to him :

' You will drive this woman wheresoever she desires to go, not leaving her till the arrangements for the delivery of her husband's coffin are complete, and she has been taken to her own home, you understand ? '

The man saluted. Then, addressing Lee Song's wife, the Commissioner went on : ' Go with this man, he will drive you to the coffin-maker's ; in that way, time will be saved and you will not be weary. I know that many things must be ready before the morning, and I myself will go to the *Kongsi* and ask them to arrange all the other details according to your custom. When to-morrow comes, be here at half past seven together with the bearers, mourners and all the people taking part in the procession. You shall be allowed to see your husband here in this office and your son may come too. The procession is to be formed up under this window, for it is my wish that Lee Song may see it and take comfort at the sight of the funeral prepared for him. Go now, there is yet time, those who prepare for death are wont to work swiftly in this land.'

The woman threw herself at the feet of the Commissioner in gratitude. Gently he raised her and led her to the door where she turned to him and said in a broken voice : ' *Tuan*, tell Lee Song . . . make him understand. . . . '

The Padre had been a silent witness of the scene, but when the woman had gone he said in an anxious tone, 'Is there anything I can do, I feel I am to blame.'

'No,' was the answer, 'it is not your fault, Padre, the man asked you questions you were bound to answer. It is Lee Song who is to blame, he fixed his mind on one idea and nothing you could say would move him. I shall have to tell him later on, but the first thing to be done is to get the funeral prepared. That is most important, it is the only thing we can do for him now, and it will go far towards compensating him if he can see the procession assembled before he dies. Do not go to him yet, come again about two o'clock this afternoon and we will see him together. I must hurry to the *Kongsi* and get them to help, it is imperative that the many *tukangs* be set to work at once.'

Calling a rickshaw, the Commissioner was soon on his way to the Street of the Goldsmiths. He went to the shop visited by the Padre on the Saturday. He was received with much bowing and the old *Towkay* came forward.

'You honour us,' he said as he led the way through to the room at the back of the shop.

'Forgive my hurried speech,' began the Commissioner; 'my business is urgent.'

'Speak, my friend,' said the other. These two men had met in consultation many times, when great issues were at stake.

'*Towkay*,' said the Commissioner, 'there has been a grave misunderstanding . . . the young Padre . . . he visited you.'

'Say no more,' said the *Towkay*, 'I understand.' He smiled and nodded his head. 'So,' he went on, 'you know . . . well, it is your job to find out these things, but you

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The man saluted. Then, addressing Lee Song's wife, the Commissioner went on : ' Go with this man, he will drive you to the coffin-maker's ; in that way, time will be saved and you will not be weary. I know that many things must be ready before the morning, and I myself will go to the *Kongsis* and ask them to arrange all the other details according to your custom. When to-morrow comes, be here at half past seven together with the bearers, mourners and all the people taking part in the procession. You shall be allowed to see your husband here in this office and your son may come too. The procession is to be formed up under this window, for it is my wish that Lee Song may see it and take comfort at the sight of the funeral prepared for him. Go now, there is yet time, those who prepare for death are wont to work swiftly in this land.'

The woman threw herself at the feet of the Commissioner in gratitude. Gently he raised her and led her to the door where she turned to him and said in a broken voice : ' *Tuan*, tell Lee Song . . . make him understand. . . . '

The Padre had been a silent witness of the scene, but when the woman had gone he said in an anxious tone, 'Is there anything I can do, I feel I am to blame.'

'No,' was the answer, 'it is not your fault, Padre, the man asked you questions you were bound to answer. It is Lee Song who is to blame, he fixed his mind on one idea and nothing you could say would move him. I shall have to tell him later on, but the first thing to be done is to get the funeral prepared. That is most important, it is the only thing we can do for him now, and it will go far towards compensating him if he can see the procession assembled before he dies. Do not go to him yet, come again about two o'clock this afternoon and we will see him together. I must hurry to the *Kongsi* and get them to help, it is imperative that the many *tukangs* be set to work at once.'

Calling a rickshaw, the Commissioner was soon on his way to the Street of the Goldsmiths. He went to the shop visited by the Padre on the Saturday. He was received with much bowing and the old *Towkay* came forward.

'You honour us,' he said as he led the way through to the room at the back of the shop.

'Forgive my hurried speech,' began the Commissioner; 'my business is urgent.'

'Speak, my friend,' said the other. These two men had met in consultation many times, when great issues were at stake.

'*Towkay*,' said the Commissioner, 'there has been a grave misunderstanding . . . the young Padre . . . he visited you.'

'Say no more,' said the *Towkay*, 'I understand.' He smiled and nodded his head. 'So,' he went on, 'you know . . . well, it is your job to find out these things, but you

cannot blame us for taking advantage of an offer to help one of our own people.'

The Commissioner saw that the *Towkay* evidently thought the Padre had been planning to free Lee Song, but he ignored the inference. An explanation could come later on.

'I blame no one,' he said. 'I come to ask your help, *Towkay*.'

'For whom?'

'For Lee Song. No one is more sorry than I am that the law must take its course. To-morrow he dies and owing to this misunderstanding nothing has been prepared for the funeral. I have sent his wife in my car to the coffin-maker's, but so many other details have to be attended to, and I know that from an order of yours, speed and good work will be the result. *Towkay*, I have to go back to the jail and tell Lee Song the plot he expected to succeed, has failed; if I can assure him that his funeral procession will be all he wished it to be, he will go to his death knowing that he has not "lost face." Help me, *Towkay*, a word from you and this town will be a hive of industry to-night and Lee Song's body will have a worthy escort. If it is a case of an extra hundred dollars or so, call on me, I would gladly give it to make sure that my friend goes to the grave with all the display customary for one of his standing.'

The old *Towkay* bowed. 'There is no need of money,' he said, 'the *Kongsis* is wealthy; besides, there will be the money that Lee Song has saved for this funeral. Your offer was a kind one, *Tuan*, it will not be forgotten, nor shall we forget that you called Lee Song your friend. Your request shall be granted, and because of your kindly interest in our people, more than you asked shall be given. Lee Song shall have a funeral that will be the talk of this town for many years to come.'

The Commissioner stood up, he held out his hand, the *Towkay* placed his in it and pressed palm to palm. 'Thank you, *Towkay*, like all your race you are generous. The procession should be inside the courtyard at half-past seven, so that Lee Song may see it before he dies.'

'Is that allowed?' asked the *Towkay*.

'Not usually,' was the reply, 'but in this case, I have ordered that it shall be so.'

'So,' commented the old Chinaman, '*we* are not the only generous people. All will be ready at the appointed time.'

No more was said and the Commissioner went away, glad to think that Lee Song would have a funeral that would be the envy of all his friends.

That same afternoon the Padre came to the Commissioner's office. 'Sit down, Padre,' said the officer, 'Now we must have Lee Song in and make him understand exactly what will happen to-morrow.'

'You really think he hopes to escape.'

'Oh yes, there is no doubt while you explained that Christ could save *your* soul, Lee Song fixed on the one idea and thought you could easily arrange for *his* life to be saved. We must face the facts. It was not your fault; this man had doubtless heard the children talking of Christ as Someone important, the children may have helped to lead his thoughts astray, and it is so difficult to discuss religious matters without a perfect knowledge of the language. However, we will have the man in and get things straight.'

'But I cannot understand his tongue.'

'I know, we will both speak through the interpreter,' and the Commissioner gave the necessary orders.

There was no need for much to be said, for when Lee Song was brought in, he looked at the two Europeans and drew

his own conclusions. So the plot had failed. Well, after all, he could hardly have hoped to fool the Commissioner, he might have known it. He heard the Commissioner speaking and then the interpreter translate, but he paid little attention. The Padre then spoke and Lee Song became more alert when the translation of the words began: 'I tried to tell you so many times that your life could not be saved, it is the *soul* of a man that matters, it is the *soul* that we pray may be saved.'

Lee Song looked at the interpreter, he understood now that he heard the explanation in his own tongue, and at once he answered, and said to the interpreter: 'Tell him *I* want no one to tell me about my soul, tell him I can look after my own soul. Have I not saved many dollars throughout all these years so that my soul may have suitable escort and comfort on its long journey after my body is dead? Is there not much money put away for my funeral? The coffin . . .'

He stopped speaking, his voice seemed to trail away, his face changed, he was a pitiful sight as he turned to the Commissioner and asked with quivering lips:

'*Tuan*, the coffin! I have given no orders, my wife, she knows nothing! I shall be shamed, I did not want my body to be carried from this place in a common criminal's coffin. I wanted . . . Oh, *Tuan*, help me, help me!'

Ignoring the interpreter, the Commissioner spoke to the man in Chinese. 'Listen,' he said, 'the coffin you booked is even now on its way here and your wife and the *Kongsi* are making the necessary arrangements. Have no fear, all will be ready.'

Lee Song looked at the clock above the door; he shook his head. 'So you say, *Tuan*, but the time . . . it cannot be done.'

The Commissioner banged his fist on the table. 'I say it *will* be done,' he said. 'I have been to the *Kongsi* and they promised, and you shall see that promise fulfilled to-morrow.'

Lee Song sadly shook his head again. 'So you say, *Tuan*, but . . .' He still doubted.

The Padre, who had been forgotten, interrupted with : 'What does he say ?'

The interpreter explained that the conversation related to Lee Song's funeral and added : 'He wants his funeral to be "Number One Chinese fashion."'

The Padre was astonished, and remarked in an undertone to the Commissioner : 'Strange that a man so near death should think only of his funeral.'

'I know it seems strange to you,' answered the Commissioner, 'but his real anxiety is to save his "face," and,' he added, 'he shall not "lose face" if I can help it.' Then to the prisoner he said, in kindly tones, 'Go now, Lee Song, and trust me, I will not let you down.'

Lee Song was the picture of misery ; he said nothing, but gazed with a puzzled look at first one, then the other of the two Europeans. It was evident his mind was troubled. The Padre had failed and the Commissioner knew. Would the police officer really help him ?

The Commissioner knew what was passing in the Chinaman's mind and when he had gone his feelings got the better of him.

'Oh, Padre !' he exclaimed, 'this is a terrible thing, you were not to blame, but . . . well, you see, Lee Song trusted me and now . . .' He paused and then went on :

'You are new to this country and you cannot understand the torture that will be Lee Song's this night. To keep on reassuring him does no good, he will not be happy until he

actually sees that procession. I cannot save him from this misery of doubt all through the hours of his last night on earth. I ought to have asked you the subject of your conversations with him; naturally you could see no harm would result, but I could have told you that for Lee Song—now standing on the brink of eternity—anything more attractive than his own faith—his own beliefs to which he and his family have clung for generations—would be unthinkable. Even when you realized he might misunderstand, you could not hope to enlighten him, your knowledge of the languages of this country is as yet too imperfect. Why, I have passed over thirty years between this country and China and I have only touched the fringe of the Chinese character and know but a fraction of their age-old customs and superstitions.’ He sighed. ‘Oh well, there will be no sleep for the poor soul to-night. Oh, for the morning! I’m sorry, Padre, but I had to let off steam, you *do* understand, don’t you?’

The Padre nodded; he rose to go. ‘I think we shall all three spend a wretched night,’ he said. ‘Shall I come in the morning, or do you think Lee Song would rather I didn’t?’

‘Oh, yes, *do* come. Lee Song bears no malice, you must not think that, he gambled—and lost—that will be his view. Everything will be all right to-morrow, and I’d like you to see how Lee Song takes it.’

‘Do you think I am not directly to blame for this mistake?’

‘No one is really to blame,’ said the other earnestly. ‘Lee Song asked you questions, from your answers he fixed on an idea, and when a Chinaman does that he takes some shifting. When he has seen that funeral procession he will be content, for the funeral will be a magnificent one, half this town is working on it all night.’

But as the Padre went home he looked very dejected.

Tuesday dawned bright and clear, the sky was a deep hard blue, not a cloud to be seen, not a breath of air stirred the leaves on the trees in the prison courtyard. The Commissioner was in his office at seven, and at seven-thirty the Padre arrived. He was taken to the office where the Commissioner motioned to him to join him at the window. A commotion at the big gate heralded the arrival of the funeral cortège and as Lee Song's wife and children appeared the Commissioner called to his clerk. 'Go, tell them to bring Lee Song's wife here with her son, then fetch the prisoner.'

While waiting for these orders to be carried out the Commissioner carefully noted the details of the long cavalcade that was entering the gate. He sighed with satisfaction as the big gate closed on the last hired wailer, shutting out the curious crowd assembled outside. He checked over the various sections of the company in the courtyard, knowing how many were the items of dress, symbolic paintings, and superstitious observances that went to the making of a really splendid Chinese funeral. Yes, the *Kongsi* had been very generous. Lee Song would be pleased; such a grand turnout had not been seen for a long time in the town.

The prisoner's wife and son entered the office. As was customary on such occasions they were barefoot, their feet dusty from walking along the road; they wore new sackcloth, oatmeal coloured, but though rough in texture its stiff clean folds gave them a dignified air, as they stood, silently waiting, with that blank look that is the common facial expression of the Chinese when undergoing great emotion. But, when Lee Song was brought in, the face of his wife lit up and she asked eagerly:

'Can he see, *Tuan*?'

The Commissioner nodded, he was feeling the tense tragedy of the moment—would Lee Song once more feel that a white man would not let him down after he had seen what was in the courtyard ?

At his wife's call, the prisoner went to the window and looked with a critical eye upon his own funeral procession assembled below. The coffin—a great tree-trunk, hollowed out and painted red—was being carried into the building. Lee Song's eyes followed it. His wife, anxious that he should miss no detail, called his attention to the rich silken banners with their 'characters,' all cut ruthlessly from stiff brocade costing many dollars per yard. 'See,' she said, 'rolls and rolls of silk were used, no expense spared, they tell me the floor of the shop was strewn with the waste pieces !' She indicated the bearers of the banners in their red coats and hats—the members of the family, supplemented by a number of hired mourners—the many wailers—the musicians—the many big baskets of mock money to pay Lee Song's way to those celestial regions which were pictured in his mind as something quite different from the 'golden streets' and 'many mansions' of the Padre's Heaven. The 'money' consisted of squares of rough packing paper with little dabs of silver paper stuck in the middle of each leaflet and all were cunningly folded like boxes so that the air could reach them quickly and the sum total arrive at its destination the sooner. These papers would be burned by men hired for the purpose ; all day long they would go up in a continual smoke spiral outside Lee Song's shop. Excitedly the woman pointed to the food which would sustain the soul in its upward flight. Ducks cooked whole, their long necks hanging over the edges of priceless china dishes, a sucking pig, fruit piled in great pyramids. Lee Song gazed upon it all with evident pleasure, he could even joke

and say : ' My soul will enjoy that meal.' Then he added : ' It is well done, but there has been much work and there is surely more than was arranged for. How was it done—who helped ? They must be rewarded.'

The woman turned to the Commissioner and in a shrill treble told of his efforts on Lee Song's behalf. ' It was the *Tuan Besar*,' she said ; ' he enlisted the aid of the *Kongsi*, he spoke of you as his friend and the old *Towkay* gave the orders.' She went on to tell of the loan of the car, of the Commissioner's consideration for her, and finished : ' Had it not been for him, all this could never have been accomplished and you would not have had so grand a funeral !'

Lee Song faced the Commissioner—for a moment there was silence as the two men stood there, but the heart of the Commissioner was warmed by the look of gratitude in Lee Song's eyes. Then the prisoner spoke, once or twice his voice actually faltered, and the *Tuan Besar* knew that this man was much moved, for a Chinaman rarely shows emotion. Lee Song gathered confidence as his speech progressed and the Commissioner began to show signs of embarrassment—he blushed—once or twice raising his hand, in a deprecating gesture, but Lee Song went on speaking. Then he paused and asked that he might address his son. The boy stood calm and still, paying great attention to the words of his father and when asked a question replied in a clear strong voice.

Then Lee Song said simply, ' I am ready, *Tuan* '—adding with a pathetic smile—' you will come with me, my friend ?'

To the Padre Lee Song said as he shook his head, ' Solly no good—what can do ?'

Two warders ranged themselves one on each side of the man about to be hanged, but the Commissioner waved them

back and with his hand on Lee Song's shoulder, the Englishman walked alongside his friend, the Chinaman ; the eyes of the Commissioner were misty and his head was bowed, but Lee Song walked firmly and proudly to his death, his chin up, his face transfigured.

The Padre waited in the office. When the Commissioner returned he walked across to the window, holding up his hand for silence, so together they watched the scene in the courtyard.

The great coffin was brought out, its scarlet colouring emphasising the conventional lines into which the tree, of which it was made, had been shaped. Following it came the widow and son, they waited while the huge catafalque was carried forward to receive its burden. A gaudy affair this, with its panoply of paper all decorated with brightly coloured paintings of scrolls, beasts and symbolic signs telling of the sex and virtues of the deceased.

The procession formed up : behind the coffin, now under its ornate canopy, walked the family mourners, all barefoot ; the hired wailers took up their positions ; the musicians and banner-bearers fell into line, and all was in order. Then the guard flung open the big gate and Lee Song started on his triumphal progress through the town, the musicians struck up a weird lament and as the coffin passed under the window, the Commissioner stood at the salute.

Then he spoke, and his voice was far from steady as he said : ' There goes a brave man, Padre ; I only hope when my time comes that I can face death as bravely as he did.'

' He said nothing ?' asked the Padre.

' Not a word, but he faced the executioner without a tremor. That sight of his funeral procession buoyed him up. Lee Song was a fine fellow.'

‘Yet,’ said the Padre, ‘one cannot get away from the fact that he was a murderer.’

‘Quite so, but look at the way he took his punishment. He knew I was largely responsible for running him in, but he bore no malice. It was my job to get him—I did so. I won—Lee Song lost, and lost like a gentleman. I grant you he was a murderer but, after all, he did his own killing.’

The Padre stared at the speaker. ‘What *do* you mean?’ he asked.

‘Why, Lee Song need not have killed that man. He could have hired someone to do it, but he chose to defend his honour himself.’

‘Hired a man!’ echoed the Padre, aghast.

‘Oh yes, there are such people. We caught a man a few months back—a hired assassin—a small inoffensive-looking individual, but, to my certain knowledge he had committed twenty-two murders, for which he had been well paid!’¹

‘It seems incredible,’ said the Padre. ‘I wish I understood these people better.’ Then he added: ‘There is one favour I’d like to ask of you.’

‘And that is?’

‘I should so like to know the gist of the conversation that took place here just before Lee Song went to his death. Do you think the interpreter remembers something of it, I don’t suppose he could remember the exact words.’

‘That’s where you’re wrong, he can tell you every word, it is his business. We’ll have him in.’

The interpreter was called. ‘Now, Padre,’ said the Commissioner, ‘tell him what you wish to know.’ The Padre repeated his request.

‘Where shall I start?’ asked the interpreter.

¹ A fact.

‘ From the time when Lee Song spoke to his wife at that window, nothing was translated after that.’

So the Padre was told of how Lee Song’s wife pointed out the various details of the procession, of her delight in telling of the amount of waste in the making of the banners, of Lee Song’s praise, his query as to how all had been accomplished in so short a time. Then the interpreter paused. He looked at the Commissioner.

‘ Do I continue ? ’ he asked.

It was the Padre who answered, ‘ Yes, please.’

But the interpreter waited. ‘ Shall I, *Tuan* ? ’ he asked of his superior officer.

The Commissioner considered for a moment, and then said : ‘ Yes, tell him all. I owe it to the memory of Lee Song.’

The interpreter licked his lips—he was going to enjoy this immensely ; when translating for the *Tuan Besar*, the order had ever been—‘ cut compliments ’—now he was to be given the reins. Add to this the fact that he—like many others who had worked long years in this office—worshipped the Commissioner. Never before had he had such an opportunity, he intended to make the most of it. Drawing himself up he declaimed the translation of Lee Song’s last words.

He began : ‘ Then Lee Song turned to the *Tuan Besar*, and spoke thus : “ You are my friend and the friend of my house. Yesterday all was black, the shadow of shame was likely to fall upon me and my people, a shadow which you averted. You know how much custom and tradition mingle with the life and death of the Chinese, you have made it possible for my burial to be conducted with all the ceremony and observances due to one of my position. Even this was not enough, you helped my wife, making

the way easy for her, taking care that she was not wearied by the journeys necessary for the accomplishment of the task in front of her. You visited my guild, which has ever revered your name and because you spoke of me as 'friend' they chose to honour me as such, by providing a procession of such magnificence that it will be the talk of this town. Without your help, I might have gone from this place as a common coolie, unattended by the train of followers, to pay for which I have put by many dollars. This day you have saved the face of Lee Song and his family, so that there will be no shame attached to my name—it will be remembered with honour. We are deep in your debt and it is a debt I can never repay. My poor thanks are all I can offer, but permit that I speak of this matter to my son."

'Then,' went on the Interpreter, 'Lee Song spoke to his son, thus: "My son, you have heard. This debt—this honourable burden—I place upon your shoulders. Never lay it down, pass it on at your death to your descendants. Watch this man, and whenever it lies within your power, make the road easy for him. In their turn your sons and grandsons shall make smooth the path of this man's descendants, should their ways cross, for he has done well by us this day and we must not cease throughout the ages to show our gratitude." And Lee Song's son promised his father that he would do his part towards paying the debt. Then Lee Song said, "I am ready, *Tuan* . . ."'

'That will do, you may go,' interrupted the Commissioner gruffly. The recital had moved him—it sounded more impressive rendered in English—and when the door had closed on the interpreter, he said quietly:

'Well, Padre, wasn't Lee Song rather fine?'

'Yes,' was the answer, 'and to think that *I* in my pride thought I was the teacher; he could have taught me much.

I wish I had your understanding—your practical knowledge of these people.’

‘And is there any reason why you should not acquire it?’

‘You mean I could learn Chinese?’

‘Oh, I mean much more than that. Have you any private means, or are you dependent on your salary?’

‘I have a small income, enough to live on with care, but go on, tell me what you think I can do.’

‘All right, I will. Give up the post you now hold. Go to China, attach yourself to a mission—preferably a medical one—learn not only the language but the hundred and one customs and superstitions governing the lives of the people, live *their* life, not yours, until you really understand them. Then you could either stay in China, or come back here and take up some post in which you could be a friend and counsellor to the Chinese here, who, because of your friendship for Lee Song, would be glad to welcome you.’

‘But I hope they do not think that I would have helped Lee Song to escape.’

‘Oh, as for that incident, it is known only to ourselves and the people at the *Kongsi*—a word from me and it will be buried for ever, but what will *not* be forgotten is that you were a friend to Lee Song. Do you think your many visits passed unnoticed?’ The speaker laughed. ‘Why, when you pass by, no longer do they say: “There goes the *Tuan Padlee*.”’

‘Why, what do they call me?’

‘A day or so back I heard you spoken of as “*Kawan Lee Song*.”’

The Padre’s face lit up. ‘The friend of Lee Song,’ he said softly. ‘Well—I am proud of that title.’

‘Even though he *was* a murderer?’ said the Commissioner, his eyes twinkling.

‘Yes,’ said the Padre firmly, and added: ‘I am beginning to understand. . . .’ He paused; then went on sadly: ‘But oh, how I shall miss Lee Song!’

‘Ah,’ said the Commissioner in sympathetic tone, ‘you see how these people wrap themselves round your heart. Think over my suggestion, Padre, you are just the man for the job.’

‘But it will take years to learn the language, won’t it?’

‘Say three years in China, then you could go on studying here or stay there. It is impossible to fix a period, for you will never stop learning once you start.’

‘And yet you say the people here would remember me, after all that time?’

‘You do not understand, Padre. They would never cease to remember, you may never return to this land, but you will be watched, messages of goodwill will follow you, and many whom you will never meet will know you well, wherever you go and should you return to Malaya your welcome is a certainty. The gratitude of a Chinaman is an everlasting thing and its ramifications of such extent as to be immeasurable. You heard what Lee Song said in thanking me—his injunction to his son?’

‘Oh yes! That was beautifully expressed, and he seemed to speak as if he meant it all.’

‘He certainly did,’ agreed the other, ‘that speech was no empty set of compliments. A few years back it would have meant gifts—expensive ones—but lately the Government has rightly restricted such expressions of gratitude to flowers and fruit, and the best of each will be on my table until I retire in three months’ time. More than that, if any relative of mine came out East he would find no difficulty in getting

—or in the management of—servants. Risk to life and limb would be lessened for him ; without his knowledge, someone would be watching over his interests as Lee Song said : “to make his way easy.” You see what I mean ?’

For a moment there was no answer, then the young clergyman said slowly, ‘I feel like repeating Lee Song’s words : “yesterday all was black.” You have raised me from the depth of despair. I feel there is a hope that I may be of use someday but, oh, I am impatient to start—I wish I could begin this very day—now.’

‘And so you shall,’ said the Commissioner. From a drawer in his desk he took a beautifully carved box containing the metal slab, the ink and brush-pen used for Chinese writing. ‘A present from the *Towkay*,’ he explained, as he began to fashion the Chinese characters on a paper, with the pen made from the tiny pin-tail feathers of the snipe. The writing finished, he handed the paper to the Padre, saying :

‘Take that to the old *Towkay* at the *Kongsi*, he will provide you with a teacher, you can begin at once.’

The Padre rose to depart, and as the two men shook hands the Commissioner said with a smile, ‘You know, people will call you mad : I’ve given you a life sentence.’

The Padre laughed heartily. ‘I know, I cannot thank you enough, but I think you understand how I feel about this. I am going straight to the *Kongsi*—now.’

‘Good,’ said the Commissioner ; ‘come and see me often, I too can help you, until I start for Home. I only wish I had someone of my own blood to do as you are doing, but I have only one son and he shows no inclination to come out East, so Lee Song’s payment of what he was pleased to call his debt to me will never come into the question.’

But someone had been forgotten—a small boy of eight—

the grandson of the Commissioner. After his retirement the Commissioner found in this lad a ready listener to his stories of early days in Malaya and China and though the old man died before the grandson grew up, the memories of those tales remained in the boy's mind.

So it happened that many years after the events related in this story, a fair-haired cadet was appointed to the Malayan Police Service. He heard his friends grumbling, finding the heat trying, the natives troublesome, the country disappointing, but the Commissioner's grandson could never agree with them. For him, things went smoothly. He had no domestic troubles, the Chinese clerks in the office seemed more and more anxious to serve him as the pleasant years rolled by. His home letters were full of enthusiastic tributes, to the country, and its people, but of all the races populating Malaya—Chinese—Indians—Malays—Javanese and many others—it was the Chinese he mentioned more than the others, telling of the help they were to him in every way, what splendid fellows they were, etc.

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Lee Song's grandsons were paying the debt.

AN OLD COUNTRY HOUSE.

BY DAVID LEIGHTON.

THERE is nothing remarkable about the house to which so many stories have attached themselves. It stands only a short way from the nearest road, and is thus not approached by one of those noble, winding drives that give access to most of the Irish country houses. Nor did those who sat in the front windows of the great drawing-room ever overlook a wide prospect of woodlands, meadows and distant mountains ; for the ilex trees in the drive, and a stone wall at the end of a paddock, have always bounded the view. As for the house itself, the front part was built while the classical style still lingered : two corinthian pillars support the porch, and a gable, in the Greek temple style, is set into the façade, above the porch, as a kind of ornament. A long wing connects the front part of the house to the kitchens and stables, which form a splendid and imposing quadrangle, where the ghosts of great rounds of beef, of horses, sporting dogs, ostlers, dairy-maids, and farm-hands still linger. The garden is separated from the house, and is surrounded by a fairly high wall : it is not one of those massive walls called famine walls, which half-famished peasants raised, in the bad years, in return for food ; but it is rather higher and more solid than the ordinary garden wall in Ireland. I suspect that the master spent some money upon relief work, but that his outlay was measured carefully. The house will never be inhabited again : the walls are covered with creepers that have forced their way through the broken windows, and have dislodged the slates on the

roof, and exposed the roof timbers. The good Georgian stonework stands firm, but the window-frames are half powdered with rottenness, and entire tribes of daws sail in and out of the chimneys, confident that a fire in the hearth below, and a sweep's brush, will never disturb them. The garden, like the house, is a burial-ground of old habits : the hot beds and the cold frames are mouldering wreckage ; a few lichen-covered trees that once bore fruit still cling to the walls ; but the beds that were once smothered with potato foliage, or striped with peas, beans, onions and celery, are great tracts of couch grass. I saw a few patches of box ; but the garden paths to which the box served as a boundary have long since been buried beneath accumulations of leaves that have fallen upon them, year after year, and have there rotted themselves into good seed-beds for nettles, dandelions, and coarse, rank grass.

I have searched, diligently, for authentic particulars about the man who gave this house such a sinister reputation, and I have not discovered many. He was born in 1815, and was, thus, thirty-two years old when the famine swept the country. He must have loved his country after his own fashion, for he wrote a book upon the ancient churches of Ireland, which competent historians and archæologists think very ill of. I obtained a copy of the book and read it—hoping that I should discover something of the author's nature in it—but I found it very impersonal : a conscientiously compiled catalogue of old towers, ruined abbeys, lancet windows, Norman and Early English doorways, Celtic crosses and the rest. If a man wrote it to-day, he would hawk it for long before he found a publisher ; but in those days, when families gathered round the fireside and read aloud by turns, it was not so hard to sell goods in the book bazaar. The book is bound in dark green

cloth, and is printed in that most execrable of all printing—the mid-Victorian, before the Ruskinians had raised its standard. All this illustrates the era, but explains little or nothing of the man. I have seen an old country gentleman who knew the man when he was very old: he was, then, extremely sanctimonious, and read prayers to his establishment, twice a day. None of these things gave him the place that he occupies in our local history, and this was first explained to me by the herdsman who tends the cattle that now graze round the old house.

‘Well, sir,’ began the old fellow, ‘’twas in the times when the English had us right down, d’ye understand, and nobody could prosper, except they was with the English. His father was a good man; he had a farm near by to Cloanfeigh, and the family was real Irish, for their name was O’Dea, and had been from all time. Well, his father worked hard and got middling strong, but the family would never have gone forward as they did but for young Michael. He was christened Michael O’Dea, but what should he do, for to advance himself, but turn Protestant, and call himself Magnus Dean; and it advanced him all right, for by the time he was thirty, he was agent to three landlords.’

Authentic history corroborates this. Many tenant farmers made money during the French wars, and certainly the Protestant gentry were more bigotted when the new century was starting, than they had ever been during that long night of Catholic affliction which Protestants call the penal days. It disturbed them to hear that Pitt and his colleagues were giving the liberal Grattan a good hearing. I doubt not, therefore, that only a Protestant could have become agent to the two great demesnes that young Magnus Dean henceforward administered: Colonel Devereux’s, whose lands border the Shannon, and Lord Lichford’s, whose

estate stretched northward, until it reached the Carran mountains.

‘Well, then,’ the herdsman continued, ‘’twas an ill day for everybody when Michael O’Dea was made agent; for after he’d been in his post a couple o’ years he began his bad ways just when the hunger was coming on us. There was twenty families put out the first year of the famine, and as many more the next year, and gosh, sir, the man had no pity at all; for one day his knockers¹ told him there was a woman lying dead of the hunger in one of the cabins they’d knocked, and ahl he said was, “Then you’ve buried her; what’s the matter with you?” So doesn’t that show ’twas only the hunger that was keeping the people from paying the rent; come now, till I show you.’

I walked across two fields, and then along a lane thick with blackthorn: when we reached the end of it, the herdsman drew away a tangle of brushwood, and pointed out the sites of the cabins. I did just detect traces of human habitations; they were in about the same state as the vestiges of a Pictish camp or the middens of a Neolithic settlement. ‘’Twas on that road the people walked, when they was put out,’ said the herdsman, ‘and ’twas there that two women fell of the hunger.’

Authentic history neither confirms nor denies this, so here was I a-wondering on a matter that has perplexed and divided our greatest savants: How reliable is tradition? As it is, for the most part, an encyclopædia of nonsense, are we to believe those passages in it that are a little more rational? To my friend the herdsman, to know where some unrecorded event occurred is to produce proof that

¹ The men who evicted tenants at the landlords’ orders, so called because they knocked down the wall of the cottage.

it happened. This is not testimony that a historian accepts, or that a judge admits ; but, when all is said and done, our guide-books to the Holy Land would be in a sad case if it were always rejected. In this particular case, I believe the story is accurately told. Somebody saw the terrible scene : the grappling-irons thrown on to the thatched roof ; the walls knocked with a crowbar ; somebody saw the family move off, and watched the women fall, where the may and the blackthorn now mark the turn in the lane. When the business was faithfully described in the cabins that night, it was registered in our local history. Telling these stories is still an art and an entertainment : the cinema and the factory have not yet obliterated our records.

‘ Well, Danny,’ said I, ‘ it’s a bad story ; but what good was Magnus Dean doing to the estate he was managing by treating people so badly ? Why did his masters allow it ? ’

‘ Ach, sir, ’tis easy to see you don’t understand at ahl. After the man was turned Protestant, he was for putting out as many as he could, and then making a fair-sized place out of the places they’d left, and letting it to a Protestant he’d bring down from the north.’

I understood better now. Magnus Dean was engaged in what the landlords of those days called cleaning : the small-holders were evicted, whenever an opportunity occurred, and the land ‘ reset ’ to new tenants. The local board of guardians was generally advised to grant no relief, in order that hunger might drive the homeless wanderers farther afield. I was, in fact, learning details of a state of affairs that has been, for the most part, recorded in statistics of surplus population.

The herdsman now continued. ‘ ’Tis true for you there was many doing the same ; but none near here had his

bad heart, and none was so cruel. There was more than a hundred he'd sworn to have out. They kept in for a time, by paying the rent ; but how was anybody to be sure he'd have the rent, every rent day, when he had the hunger in his cabin ? And when the knockers came back and asked him, one day, would he wait a little as there was a woman lying sick in one of the cabins he'd ordered to be knocked, he answered, " You may wait till the first wet or frosty night ; she won't stay where she is after the thatch is off." Well, when he'd knocked the cabins of them that couldn't pay because they had the hunger, he rested a while ; but he soon began again, and this time, he was after evicting them, even if they'd paid, just for to clear the land. And when he started doing this, he ordered ahl the tenants to line the road, with their cattle, when he went to church on Sunday, so's he could count their cattle and put out those that had too few. Now wasn't it very hard on them to be standing like that on a Sunday morning ? 'Twasn't much help to him though ; for there was some decent men on the next estate, and they lent their beasts to them as thought old Magnus would say they had too few. But wasn't it worse than that when the people began to be afraid he'd put them out for going to mass, and when the priest had to make a little ark, and say mass to them on the hill ?'

I interrupted the story at this point. ' Surely, Danny,' said I, ' there must be something wrong here. How could a private person prohibit the mass from being said twenty years after the Emancipation Act was law ?'

' Ach, not at ahl. 'Tis true for you, 'twasn't for old Magnus to say the mass was forbidden, but he could stop it being said for ahl that. For when the priest at Carrigan said 'twas time a chapel was put up, Magnus he said 'twasnt

to be, and as he was agent for ahl the demesnes round Carrigan, no chapel could be built, for Magnus wouldn't let or sell an inch of land for the purpose. And then the tenants was told, by one of the maidservants at the house, that the old man was planning to put out as many Catholics as he could, so the priest he built a little ark, and the bishop blessed it, and them that was to serve mass carried the little ark into the bog, or up into the hills, and that was where the tenants had to go to hear mass, for fear they'd be put out. Ye can see it if ye like ; it's at Carrigan yet.'

I listened in amazement to this story of an unauthorised religious persecution. Could it be true that one man, an upstart and a mere rent-collector, could thus insult and defy an entire countryside ? I determined to go to Carrigan, when I had time, to inspect the *pièce justificative* of this strange story.

The herdsman went on. ' Well, for ahl his cruel ways, he got very strong. He wasn't a rich man when he left Cloanfeigh and took the big house ; but he grew stronger every year he was there, and when he was old, he ordered a cemetery to be built in his own place. 'Tis there still.'

This detail was indeed descriptive of the upstart's pride, and of his ambition to rank with the highest in the land. There are many private cemeteries in Ireland ; but only the great territorial families built them ; and I, for one, have always thought them memorials of vainglorious pride. I seem to read a ghostly inscription upon each drooping tombstone : a declaration by some great Anglo-Irish lord that death did not level him to his poor Irish bondsmen, and that even his corrupted flesh was to be kept far, far apart from theirs. Poor Magnus Dean's pride in his own corpse availed him but little ; for this is how the herdsman ended the story.

‘ Well, he was struck very sick one day, when he was riding home, and the people at the great house had to help him down off his horse. He went straight to his bed, and he well knew he’d never be out again, for, for the three days he lay dying, he was worrying ahl the time the cemetery he’d ordered to be built wasn’t finished, and indeed they’d hardly started to put up the wall when he died. Well, it seems the family arranged with the parson that he should be put into the cemetery temporary, and moved back again when they’d finished his own place. And the putting of him into the cemetery temporary was done quietly : the real funeral was to be when the time came for him to be brought back home, and that was how ’twas done. Well, ’twas longer than they thought before the wall and the gate to the private cemetery were finished, but when they were ready, at last, they came to fetch him. The hearse was there, and there was a good share of the gentry ; but the tenants didn’t go except one, who’d been put out of his cabin, ten years before ; and when his neighbours asked him what in the world was he doing going to the funeral, he said wasn’t it reasonable to see he really did get buried and couldn’t come out again. Well, the parson read a prayer before the grave was opened ; then the diggers they opened it—they hadn’t far to go, for Magnus was only there temporary—and ’twasn’t many minutes before them diggers said he wasn’t there at ahl. Some of them he’d wronged had taken him away, d’ye understand ? Now wasn’t it very severe on the family to go there to take the master away, and to have the parson praying, and ahl the locals standing round, only for to find him gone ? ’

I had no difficulty in conceiving the consternation of that afflicted family : three miles to go in carriages that had to follow an empty hearse ; every cottager along the road

standing at his door to watch the ludicrous procession ; home reached ; the carriages dismissed ; the family at last assembled in the great sitting-room that looks out upon the ilex trees in the drive ; and then, what a sorry discussion. How many persons in the cabins that were dotted all over the countryside were party to the insult ? In all probability at least a hundred families knew all about it, and would, if questioned, exercise their marvellous talent for talking interminably without uttering a single unguarded word. It would be fruitless to seek information from them, and all the police in the county would never extract a helpful syllable. I wondered, also, whether the family talked openly about what must have weighed so heavily upon them, or whether pride kept them silent : how well the blow had been aimed ; how admirably the insult had been arranged. The stately and ceremonious procession that old Magnus had bequeathed to his corpse, the solemn translation of the coffin, and its re-burial in what old Magnus believed would be the family demesne for centuries, all turned to buffoonery and made ridiculous, and by whom ? By the cottagers whom he had driven from their homes ; by the bondsmen whom he had loaded with insults, so that now there were gibes where there should have been awe and dread ; laughter where there should have been tears and sorrow. Yes ; I agreed with the herdsman, it was very severe on the family.

‘ Did they ever get him back, Danny ? ’ I asked.

‘ Well, sir, they did, and ’twas this way. There was many people expecting to be put out, when the old man died, but the months went by, and there was no one put out, and so they began to see that young Magnus wasn’t going to be that way at ahl, at ahl, and before long there was many of the locals saying wasn’t it very hard on him

to go about not knowing where his father was lying. Well, one day a man came up with his rent, and he was owing great arrears, so he went into the office, and he said, "Here's the rent, your honour, but I can't find the arrears, so what's to be done?" Young Magnus he just looked up, and took the rent, and said, "I know you can't pay the arrears; you can stop where you are, and begin again." So the man answered, "Long life to you, for you're a lenient man. I'll see can I get news for you." So he went to them that had taken the body away, and what with talking, and making sure nobody'd ever know who'd done it, they made a plan for him to have his father back. You see, they'd only taken the coffin across the cemetery wall, and put it ten yards outside, so 'twas easy to start opening a drain through the place where they'd put him, and to pretend they'd found him, and that's how 'twas done.

The news was announced at the great house, two days later, and old Magnus was, at last, taken very quietly, and by night, to where he now lies.

I returned home, still wondering about the accuracy or inaccuracy of these strange stories. When I got back, I found young Michael Fitzpatrick, a young lad of twenty-five, working at a job that I had given him on my barn. I wonder whether he hears these stories, thought I, or do the old people exchange them with one another? If the youngsters hear them, do they credit what they hear, or have the national schools, popular science conveyed by radio, and what they are pleased to call the ticknicks (technical schools) made them sceptical? I tested the point. Had Michael ever heard of Ashfield Park? Yes, surely; and the story of oppression, cruelty and avarice was repeated word for word. Had I asked Michael to show me where the women who had been evicted fell on the road, from

hunger and despair, I should have been taken to the spot that the herdsman showed me. There were, however, two additions.

‘Ach, he was wicked ahl right, and if the clergyman had known what his knocker saw, he’d never have buried him. You see, when he lay dead there was nobody wanted to say good-bye to him, except his knocker, and he came the evening of the second day, and the people at the house was wondering why he went away so quick ; but ’twasn’t wonderful at ahl ; for when he went in, for to say a prayer, he saw that the grass was growing out of his master’s chest, and there was a goat standing by the bed eating the grass. And ’tis sure, though they put him into that private cemetery, you wouldn’t find him there now if you was to dig for him ; for ’tish’t so long ago, an old man was walking through the fields near the park, and he turned to a hedge because it came on showery. He stayed there a while till the shower was passing over, and, as he got up to go, a man came in to take his place, and ’twas Magnus Dean.’

This is a new strain in folk-lore. I cannot find that Sir James Frazer ever discovered a belief that the skeletons of those whose spirits wander have migrated from their resting-place ; but this is not surprising, for the good Sir James did not explore the folk-lore of our local hatreds, hatreds that grow in transmission, until young fellows who never saw Magnus Dean conceive it a solemn duty to invent proof of the old fellow’s eternal punishment.

I set out for the cemetery on a May morning, when the peasants were at mass. It is small, with a great conifer growing from the centre of it ; its boundaries are : a stone wall with formidable iron palings—a perfect example of the suburban cemetery style of architecture ; and a steep cliff, covered with whin and brambles, which falls sharply

into a rocky stream. The old man, his wife, his son, and an old family servant are buried there ; the inscriptions on the tombstones merely declare the fact. When I had visited the grave that my young roof-builder believes to be empty, I walked to the house, for the last time, and, as I went through the grounds, I realised that there was something remarkable about the cemetery. The site had been so chosen that it can be seen from two points only : it cannot be seen from any of the rooms on the ground floor, but it can be seen, and clearly, from the windows of the biggest bedroom in the house ; it can also be seen from what was once a shaded lawn, surrounded by boulders that have been piled up to form a grotto. If old Magnus hoped that his resting-place would be looked at, daily, from the room in which his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren would first see the light, and from the lawn where they would play with their nurses, his hopes are shattered ; for the spreading ivy has burst through the windows of the empty bedroom, and grazing cattle chew and tear the pasture of the ruined lawn.

HE WALKS WITH BEAUTY.

BY JESSIE K. MARSH.

I.

I WAS anxious to see how the man would react to the experience. I had studied him for several months and I still had no understanding of his outlook on life, whether, indeed, he had an outlook or whether perception of beauty was lost in the daily struggle with monotony and want. This plan of mine seemed likely to solve the problem, I would try it.

My friend Jim Woodyatt, who on the death of his wife had sold me his Broadland cottage, had told me about Sam Marjoram. He spoke of him as a man starved of beauty. I had laughed at this curious description of a field labourer; starved of food or beer or tobacco was comprehensible, but of beauty, and by that Jim meant colour, and then form, or line, or fabric, seemed to me exaggerated. After all it was only a guess on Woodyatt's part, for the man had told him nothing. Inarticulateness was Marjoram's chief characteristic, he said.

I decided that I would know him better. Already I knew something of his well-kept garden, which Jim and Mary had described as wonderful, considering—— Considering he had no money, very little time, and none of the assurance that enables a man to beg seeds here or a cutting there. Jim had told me of a tragedy of dahlias which his wife had promised, and died before she could give, and how glad he had been to let Marjoram have the plants ordered for the cottage garden which he, Jim, had had no heart to plant.

It was now mid-July and some of these dahlias, removed by two generations from Woodyatt's gift, would be coming into flower.

Marjoram had changed his cottage since the Woodyatts' days and his new home lay down a lane, in a wet summer inches deep in mud, but with soil so fat that anything would thrive in it. I at once recognised the house by the sturdy dahlias topping the railings, dahlias not yet in flower but with colossal buds. I made myself known as the new tenant of Staithe Cottage, the friend of Mr. and Mrs. Woodyatt. At the name the man's dull face brightened and he took my extended hand.

'She was a kind lady and her death right broke the poor gentleman up. Do you know what he is a-doing now, sir?' he asked.

I told him what I could of Woodyatt's movements and then I asked if I might see his garden. 'I don't know much about things,' I had to confess, 'for till now I have never had a garden of my own. I am a Londoner, you know.'

'Well, you've a good bit of land to start on, grow anything, will that garden at Staithe Cottage. Are you a dahlia grower like Mrs. Woodyatt, sir? See here, I've got them all named as Mr. Woodyatt give 'em, that's Ta ra ra, the biggest of the lot, a rare fellow; folks at Yarmouth, that's where I send my blooms, say they've never seen anything like it.'

I am no dahlia expert, so I accepted what I was told of Ta ra ra, only doubting the name as an unlikely one. Later, when it was in flower, I consulted a catalogue and identified it as Aman Ra, but as Ta ra ra it still lives in my memory, for I am a Londoner once more. My wife tired of the cottage in one season: the bad weather of that late August

and early September may have been the cause. Still I have seen it again, for their one experience of the water had so whetted my boys' appetite for sailing that I have promised them a fortnight on a yacht every year while their mother samples the pleasures of a new seaside place and is primed with information as to society and amusements by the time we join her.

But during the last weeks of my one summer as a Norfolk householder I managed to see a good deal of my gardening neighbour. His strange, inarticulate enthusiasm for what was in his garden and mine amused me. I gave him delphiniums and had the promise of dahlias for the following season. I asked him what he thought of the great blue spikes, seedlings of Mary's costly purchases, and I knew he longed to compare them to the blue of a New Zealand sky, or a Mediterranean Bay, or a sapphire, or would have had he ever seen any of these things. But all the words he could find were, 'They're prime.'

The purple buddleia, so beloved of butterflies, excited his admiration and I gave him the cuttings he dared not ask for. Why, with its branches hanging over the lane, he had never taken any during the two years the cottage stood empty was a mystery to me. Was it inherent honesty or was it lack of courage?

Probably the fear of neighbours' tongues. They would have known that a great useless plant like a buddleia, shading valuable cabbages and robbing the soil of goodness that belonged to parsnips and potatoes, could only have come by theft into the possession of a man who had not a penny to spare even for flowers of potential market value.

Well, Marjoram reaped a harvest this summer and I watched with interest and a little dismay how these treasures were encroaching on ground formerly devoted to much more

useful products. For Marjoram had but a farm labourer's wages, and as well as a sickly wife there were four children to feed. So potatoes were of more value than delphiniums, and a satisfied emotional sense a poor substitute for a starved body. At times I really feared to meet Mrs. Marjoram and would time my visits to an hour when I knew she had gone to 'oblige' a summer visitor on the river-bank.

II.

When back in Town I often thought of this Norfolk field labourer, but it was not till the May of the next year that I had my great idea. So pleased was I with myself for thinking of it, that I at once communicated it to my wife.

'Supposing I brought Sam Marjoram to London and took him to the Chelsea Flower Show? That would give him something to think about till the day of his death. All loveliness so concentrated that he could pack it in his brain and keep it as a store from which to draw when the monotony of sugar-beet pulling and the dull plodding behind the plough became too much for him.

Jane was not accustomed to hear me break into rhapsodies before breakfast. She looked at me critically.

'Well, Jane——?'

'We can't have the man in the house, Mrs. Beamish would give notice on the spot,' was her answer.

Mrs. Beamish is the feminine half of the married couple who compose our entire staff. They are valuable and they know it and demand preferential treatment in accordance with their worth.

'Of course not,' I answered, 'but it will be easy to find somewhere to put him up.'

Which I did at a hostel not far away. There he would be well looked after and saved any of those agonising

decisions which in lodgings he might have been obliged to make. I intended to give him two nights in Town by making up to him the wages of three lost days of work. I would meet him at Liverpool Street in the late afternoon of Wednesday of the show week and give him the whole of Thursday at Chelsea ; somehow I did not see him mixing with the Wednesday crowd. Besides on Wednesday afternoon nothing can be seen of the flowers, so Jane should have that afternoon for the enjoyment of her friends and her friends' toilettes, while we two keen horticulturalists reserved for ourselves the comparative emptiness of the Thursday tents.

Each year the show passes all expectations, but to my mind this show outdid all its predecessors. As I left it to take the car to Liverpool Street to meet my guest I could but thank God that in these days of flux and uncertainty He had left the beauty of flowers unchanged. At this moment I was not seeing it with the eyes of a man who had seen it twenty times before and who daily could enjoy beauty in its highest expressions of music or art or architecture, but with the eyes of one who save in landscape had never known beauty in any form. Well, he would have it to-morrow and I wondered how he would react.

III.

It was a cold day that Thursday of May when Sam Marjoram and I passed the turnstile and entered the fair-land of flowers. I thought we were early, but people were already leaving so I feared the tents would not be as empty as I had hoped, nor were they. I piloted my guest to the middle of the big tent and said to him :

‘I’m going to leave you to go around alone so that you

can look at what you like best. I shall be in the tent all the time looking at my favourite things. You'll find wonderful sweet peas and delphiniums that beat yours and mine. Look, Sam, dahlias in May, how have they done it ?'

Marjoram glanced anxiously at the forced dahlias. A look of relief came to his face as he said, 'Not as big as my TA RA RA, sir.'

'Well, you go off now and meet me, at twelve sharp, mind ; by these shrubs and we'll go and have some food.' I walked away, but when I was a bit hidden by the crowd I stopped to observe Marjoram's movements.

At first the enormous tent, the vividness of the exhibits, the jostle and the flurry all about him, seemed so to daze him that he could not move. Then I saw him wander aimlessly down the centre aisle. 'He is going to look at the delphiniums,' I told myself, and I moved towards Blackmore & Langdon's magnificent collection at the far end of the tent.

But Marjoram was arrested in mid-course by something, to him, far more marvellous than delphiniums. After all, they had come into his life, but here, right in the centre of the tent, were things he had never seen or dreamt of. 'Stove and Greenhouse Plants.' Truly it was a wonderful exhibit, and I from the other end of the stand gazed at it with almost as much awe as was marked on Marjoram's face. These products of the tropics, some so gorgeous, some so evil-looking ! I have seen the hibiscus hedges of Ceylon, the lurid poincarias of Panama, the jacaranda trees of Australia and the Cape—perhaps, seen against a blue sky, the loveliest sight in all creation—the bougainvillæas of many countries, but here on this stand were things I had not seen, plants that looked sinister, plants whose beauty seemed poisonous, that conjured up pictures of swamps and jungles and the lurk-

ing perils that beset travellers in unknown places. Marjoram stood and gazed as one entranced.

I saw him furtively stroke a blossom ; its velvet pile was worn by none of the flowers of his daily life. The crotons ! what business had plants to have leaves of such gorgeous colours ? Where did they come from ? What other world was there where things undreamt of here might be the sights of every day ? I could feel the man asking himself these questions. Unheeding the request—never having seen it probably—not to touch the plants, Marjoram laid his hand under one glowing croton leaf and held it there.

Our lunch was a shortened meal. Marjoram was silent, silent even for one who spoke so rarely. He wanted neither food nor drink—he was dazed. I could see that all his desire was to be back in the tent, so I bade him go and said I would follow shortly : I was becoming anxious about my experiment. When I joined him I would make him go round the show with me ; sweet peas and tulips and the wholesome flowers of everyday life should drive those baleful exotics from his mind. I found him as I had expected at ‘ Stove and Greenhouse ’ and still in that questioning, frightened state of incredulity.

‘ Marjoram,’ I said in a casual voice, ‘ you haven’t half seen the show. When you get home the people will want to know about the delphiniums and the poppies and other things and you won’t be able to tell them. Come and look at the sweet peas.’

He did not hear me, he was touching the orange spadix of the brilliant scarlet *Anthurium Scherzerianum*. ‘ Sir,’ he asked pitifully, ‘ can these things really be ? ’

It was high time we left the show. I should feel more at ease when my guest was in the prosaic atmosphere of the hostel and away from the sinister fairyland to which I

had given him admission. I shuddered to think what the effect would have been had he found the tent which housed the orchids. Some brains are not strong enough to bear the strain of a whole new world breaking in upon them.

I did not enquire how he would spend the evening, but I imagined he would keep to the countryman's habit of bed before sundown. I thrust into his hands the whole bundle of catalogues which I had gathered in the futile way one collects at flower-shows.

'Something to amuse you for the evening, Marjoram, and then you must take them home to show the people in Bastwick. They'll be interested. And mind you eat a good meal to-night, you had no dinner to speak of. You know the time I shall call for you in the morning? Well, good-bye for the present.'

'Good-bye, sir, and thank you.'

Everything was all right, I assured myself. The man's brain had not been turned; naturally he had been overcome by the strange colours and shapes he had seen. Had he unconsciously longed for all the things that these exotics conjured up, travel, wide horizons, colour and space, the something different, the escape from monotony? And to-morrow he returned to ploughing, and singling turnips, and, in its season, sugar-beet lifting—and an ununderstanding wife. God help him, poor devil! was my thought as I turned my car in the direction of my own pleasant home and Jane.

I found an alteration in the morning; the taciturn man had become loquacious. In the twenty minutes of our drive from hostel to station Marjoram could not ask questions fast enough. Where did this grow, where the other? Where did the croutons come from?

'Crotons! South America, I believe. Nearly all our

hothouse plants come from South America !' This was a sweeping assertion, but it served.

'And the funny red plant with the queer spike, *Anthy* something ?'

'Oh, the Flamingo Plant ?' How could I tell ? I tried to divert his attention by pointing out the Royal Exchange and the Bank of England.

'I have thought of them all night. I couldn't sleep for thinking.'

'Now look here, Marjoram, just put out of your mind all these plants you'll never see growing. When you get back you'll find your sweet peas and pinks and dahlias far more interesting.'

'They're poor things to them others,' was the answer. And even as I stood on the platform, waiting for the train to start, Marjoram asked a last question.

'And what is the name of that red thing, sir, the thing like a trumpet, like a bell ? You said you'd seen it growing.'

There was a whistle and the train began to move. Marjoram leaned from the window, all anxiety.

'Hibiscus,' I shouted. Then I cupped my hands round my mouth to make myself heard above the roar of the train. 'Hi-bis-cus,' to the amusement of Marjoram's fellow-travellers who probably thought I was giving him a tip for an approaching race.

IV.

So that was that, my experiment of giving a man a glimpse of beauty and his reaction to it was a thing of the past. In the hurry of work and the social round of early summer Marjoram and his affairs went out of my head. Till August, when once more I walked the lane to his cottage.

The boys and I were lying for the night at the familiar

Staithe. I sent them to get water and provisions while I paid a visit to my sometime neighbour. As I neared the cottage it surprised me to see no dahlias topping the fence. By now they should have been in fullest vigour. As I looked over I saw that they had been replaced by neat rows of lettuces and runner-beans, weedless, as were all Marjoram's crops. Tomatoes were tied to the struts of the palings and opposite the door were several rabbit-hutches. Beauty was gone and utility had taken her place.

Though it was late afternoon Marjoram was not at home and his wife appeared in answer to my knock. She greeted me with covert incivility, but then, the woman and I had never been friends.

'No, you can't see him, sir, he's taken a cow to Martham and won't be home till dark.' She did not ask me in.

'What has happened to the dahlias and all the other flowers?' I said, pointing to the lettuce rows. 'Your husband used to take such pride in them, I thought after the show he would have been keener than ever.'

A long-pent bitterness loosed itself in a torrent of words. 'And that's all the show did for him, wellnigh unsensed him it did. Days and days after he got home he could talk of nothing else, seemed dazed about ordinary things. What d'ye think was the first thing he did when he got back, pulled up all them dahlias though they hadn't been set a fortnight. "Martha," he say, "you want vegetables, you shall have 'em, dahlias ain't worth growing. Now what I saw in London, they were things if you like." Oh, sir, you shouldn't have done it, turning a man agin the only things he's able to get.'

My disclaimer was unheeded. "'Martha," he say the next day, "you've always wanted this sunny border for lettuces and Rupert's rabbits, you can have it. I've done

growing flowers, I've got them here," and he points to his head, "they walk about with me wherever I goes." Then he talks about croutons and I thought he was gone right balmy. "Sam," I say, "I wasn't a cook for five years afore I married you," and in good service, sir, where they had late dinner every night in courses, "not to know what croutons are." Fancy calling them bits of bread plants! "Sam," I said, "if you go on about them croutons next place you'll find yourself in will be the 'sylum." Oh, sir,' and the woman's eyes filled with tears showing the affection for her man that I have often noticed in nagging women, 'that wellnigh broke my heart when he pulled up the dahlias, though I'd mobbed him to do so. They was his only pleasure. Proud he was of them. Now he works at the vegetables all the evenings without saying a word. If he's got it all in his head, as he say, he keeps it there.'

I turned away from the cottage door, for there was nothing I could say, nothing do. I went down to the little *carr* which lies beyond the cottage and at the first bridge I sat down to think. Either I thought long or I fell asleep, for the sun was sinking when I left the deep shade of the trees.

Before me lay outstretched a world of beauty. In this land of low horizons the great vault of the heavens shows as in few other spots. The marshes were burnished by the setting sun and the river gleamed as a copper streak. Autumn honeysuckle trailed across the hedges and chicory flowered blue at my feet. Where in the fecund gorgeousness of the tropics was loveliness to compare with this?

'And you, Marjoram, see it every day,' and for a moment I thought with distaste of my humdrum life in Town. 'Why want those tropical flowers, Marjoram, when you can have this?' I picked a spray of honeysuckle to take

to the boys on the boat. For the instant I felt I was walking with the beauty I had hoped to give my peasant neighbour.

The while Marjoram was trudging the five miles home from Martham to prick out, if the light still served, *sauce*, as Norfolk calls all cabbage stuff, so that his wife and children should not go short in the winter.

And I firmly believe on that walk he was accompanied by the one thing for which he had always longed. Memory is a friend that rarely betrays.

WHO IS SHE ?

*Who is she who comes on stealthy feet,
With milk-white stars caught in her raven hair ;
Who is she who hastes the dropping sun,
And sets the silver moon in motion there ?*

*Who is she who comes with lullabies,
With homing birds half-sleeping on the wing,
And owls tucked in her bosom's loveliness,
Her mantle weighed with dreams that slumbers bring ?*

*Who is she whose coming quiets the earth,
And sets on fire the sun to haste its flight ?
She comes on stealthy feet, as shadows move :
You cannot see her, for her name is Night.*

ELIZABETH TEMPLE WELLS.

STABLE-YARDS AND HORSES.

BY PAMELA HINKSON.

BUSINESS connected directly or indirectly with horses, plays a much larger part in Irish country life than anyone unacquainted with that life could imagine. It was not for nothing that the ordinary country house of moderate size was built with stabling for anything from ten to thirty horses. Once only in my childhood have I seen every stall of the dozen in our stable-yard filled—that was during the War when, in addition to army horses, we were stabling some of the runners in the local races the next day. It was a wonderful sight to go into the usually deserted yard and see a horse's head looking at one, over every half-door.

Those stable-yards and the stables about them are the very centre of life for those who live in Irish country (as apart from existing). If you did not ride you could only exist. Riding, you live. And we are a race bent on living, however we may achieve it. Without horses and all the life that gathers about them, I do not know what we should do with our days, that these interests and occupations fill. Once, staying in a beautiful house in English country, an old house restored to perfection by an architect of genius, I puzzled over something. The house, set in the very heart of deep country, lacked the feeling of a country house, to me. I discovered it, coming in from a walk on a wet day and looking for somewhere to put the dogs to dry. There was no stable-yard, and no open doors of stables about it—none of the lovely dim stirring or munching of horses within those doors, no empty stall filled with straw into which one

could put a wet dog to dry and get warm. Without such a yard and all that it held for me, that house was set down against the country, rather than in it, like a painted picture.

Our yards are built deep in the country and the country life and are part of it—as much part of it as those strange mysterious, rather dark farmyards, before some house turning its side wall to the road, past which one rides when one is exercising the horses. I don't know how the shadow and mystery of those yards is achieved on a bright winter day, with the sun shining. But it is something characteristic of Irish temperament, and reminiscent of our history perhaps. A wall is built, a turf rick, a shed with a good many holes in the roof, and the yard is in the middle, deep in moving shadow, and out of it anything may come, as the horses, passing, know before you do. A child possibly, certainly two or three barking mongrel dogs for which the horses, heels are ready—they having grown up perhaps truly in the yard with the children and the dogs and knowing their ways. A few hens, a flock of turkeys—many a horse will swing round before the terror of that black army—a goat, or a wild little loose pony to go a part of the road with you. So you ride through the country in truth and the country is with you all the way, with all its uncertainty and the training that that gives. When you never know what you will come upon round the next corner, your mind keeps alert and in sympathy with the horse you ride, and his fears or lack of them. There is all the difference in the world between such riding, and hacking on a well-trained horse down a tidy lane where you know what you are going to meet. It is strange, seeing that they are brought up with them, how many Irish horses hate the sight of goats. After many a struggle to get past these, there is a feeling of triumph when that quick sense and eye miss the long sad face and

horns looking over the hedge, and you have got by without any trouble.

So many Irish memories—I had almost said all that we treasure and want to remember, but perhaps not quite all—are associated with horses and that life of which the horse is centre. A point-to-point, a race in which someone rode, the green and gold course of Punchestown framed in the blue Wicklow hills. The Horse Show on a day when the sun shone, and two people now old were young.

And people grow old so beautifully in Ireland that no one would remember how long ago it was. Not they themselves, certainly (and to be sure there are no dates in Ireland and I will give none. And people who were 'girls' are 'girls' always and 'boys' the same, if they do not marry. Evidently it is only marriage that ages you and takes you out of Tinnan-Oge). A run on a still November day of brown country and brown bare trees with just a touch of purple from the hills above, and two horses and their riders who were close together all those miles. A moment of fear at a ditch perhaps, a sudden exclamation as the horse slipped, before he recovered himself. That was how a girl showed something that brought the sun from behind the hill for the man riding with her over the same brown country as before (the sun was only there for the two of them), and so they ceased to be girl and boy in the Irish indication. And they are now grandparents and their grandchildren hunt their ponies over the same country when they come home for the holidays and ride them at evening into the stable-yard, where the old groom, who refuses to retire, waits to hear all about it.

That sound of a tired horse coming into the yard at twilight, or, later perhaps, under a winter moon. The sound—is it of oneself or of someone else, these memories being timeless?

—of a rider getting down stiffly—or a tired girl just dropping from the saddle into the hands that catch her as if she were a baby—standing for a few minutes talking as one talks in a stable-yard at evening, a warmer, friendlier sound than the few necessary cold words that suit the chilly hour in the morning when one is starting. And so, in through the yard door and up the stairs to the library where there is a fire piled high with turf and wood, and glowing, and tea. Afterwards a look at the horse in his stall, a word with him, as he turns his head from the manger, his luminous eyes deep with peace and content, a caress which shows that he and his rider are of one mind—the children never omit that. And they are rich children indeed who grow up to the delights of Irish country life as their heritage.

The yards are not very tidy, as a rule. The farmyards beyond overflow into them, as the life of the yard and the country generally, wanders into the house through the door which is always open. And no Irish servant ever thinks of objecting to the mud brought in by dogs' paws and muddy boots. Those who are in charge of the stables have the Irish dislike of monotony and doing the same thing every day and—except for the necessities of feeding and watering, which, of course, are sacred duties to a groom—they do not do the same thing every day, unless their employer has married an English wife, when, more from hospitality and courtesy than for any other reason, they fall in with her ways. They give themselves a vast amount of trouble naturally, but I think they prefer that trouble to the killing of some spirit in themselves, which would surely die, if they were to perform their work with efficiency and monotony. It breaks up much of the hardness of life when you can on occasion do the thing that is nearest and easiest at that moment, however much further and more difficult

it is going to make your next task, of which you do not think, no Irish person having the provident temperament that considers to-morrow. To-day is enough. And only by concentrating on it, can one live and enjoy to-day.

And so you will find in your own yard, probably, that when you have had one stall carefully cleaned out and fresh straw spread for the dogs, one of the cart-horses has been put into it temporarily. (Which means that it must all be cleaned out again, if you have such ideas !) And when you have had another stall prepared for a horse, you may find a couple of sickly calves in it, just put there for the night. And so the work must be done again, next day.

There are, of course, tidy yards in Ireland. I know some of them, belonging to rich people, or to English people living here, and beautiful they are with their red and green painted stable doors round them, the entrance gates to match, and the little ornamental trees in tubs of the same colour. The horses who live in such yards, put their shining heads over those doors and look at you with dreamy eyes. It may be a day of summer and they are wondering why they are in, instead of being out in the fields, standing knee deep in the rich grass under a shady tree, swishing off the flies with their tails. That is, as a rule, their summer occupation.

And, sunk deep in it, they have forgotten apparently that they ever had any other. The horse that you hunted in the winter, sharing with him that experience that while it lasts—like love—shuts out all the rest of the world and all other experiences, standing under the summer trees, will lift his head to look at you with cold, lovely, unrecognising eyes.

It is only a trick, of course. You have been friends, so close, so much of one mind, that it is embarrassing perhaps

now to remember or think of the intimacy. And so, like Millamant : ' Let us be very strange . . . and well bred . . . ' And they look across the grass at you with their lovely cold eyes, into which the peace of the fields and the chill of summer dews has come now, and turn a beautiful shoulder to you and go back to their grazing.

Those kept in through the summer for summer riding, the most sociable of all occupations, change their characters subtly but in a different way. If you should seek the best companionship in the world with a friend of your own mind, and time to talk, and that necessary key to unlock the tongue and make talking easy, you would choose summer riding. You start warm and peaceful, on a horse as kind as the sunlight—although there were bitter winter mornings when he seemed as cruel as the wind. There are no blowing branches or creaking ones over your head, or sudden swift shadows to make a fresh horse shy from one side of the road to the other, for which possibility you have to be on the alert all the time. (There was a March day when we rode up a hill past a cottage where they were spring-cleaning. And in their cleaning they had taken the rugs across the road and spread them out on the hedge. I saw what might happen before it happened and it did. The wind came just at the right moment and, slipping under the dark rug spread on the sunlit hedge, lifted it as though inside there were a monstrous thing alive. I was riding a wise horse fortunately, for the next thing I knew was that something had hit me somewhere and that the little grey head of my companion's mount was between me and my horse's head.

' I am sorry,' from the rider. And we were disentangled and rode on with no harm done.

Only late that evening, going home after a long ride and tea on the way, my right knee suddenly began to ache, and

at last we had to walk our horses home, I propping my knee up on the saddle. After a few days' rest all was well.)

But these things do not happen in summer. The horses know the rules of the game. Summer riding means magic of early mornings, with dew on the grass and the gentle sunlight playing through the trees and about the horses' ears, as different as possible from the chilly early morning riding of autumn or spring. Or it means, better still to my mind, riding after tea, down some deep lane which you choose because the flies are much less bad there, and the honeysuckle and wild roses brush your coat as you pass, and as you walk the horses, with a loose rein (talking), they will seize the chance to stop and take a mouthful of something sweet from the hedge.

Such riding and such a relationship between horse and rider is like love without passion. There is no danger in it. Nothing could happen to you on a day of summer, riding a horse as gentle as the air, lazy almost, only too willing at the end of a long gallop up a sloping hill to stop when you have had enough of it. After the storms and thrills and excitements and danger of great hunting days, one might be very glad in the full summer of one's life—all passion spent—to go only summer riding in the peaceful sunlight with a friend. But that is as one is made. And there are some for whom that would be dull and not living at all, as dull, as peaceful, as a good safe marriage founded on wisdom and friendship, not on the agonies and ecstasies and generous and reckless folly of passionate love.

For those it is worth it to go hunting still, facing the fences and banks and stone walls, even if with a cold heart at times, as it is worth it to risk the whole of a tranquil existence for one stormy illuminated moment of intense living. And after a green quiet summer, spent like the horses, out

on grass, they feel the thrill of that intensity of living stir in them again, in September, when the horses are brought in, and on some golden morning which summer still holds back from autumn, they go cubbing again.

That is a pleasant half-way world, a novitiate for those who might hesitate to take the full plunge and final vows of a hunter, who, once dedicated to that cause, may never be a free man or woman again. One can pretend merely to be taking a morning ride, and when one has had enough of it one can turn round and hack back to breakfast. And one has seen as—strangely—in no other way can one see it, the full beauty of the September countryside.

So, with a gentle gradualness one may make friends with the horse one is to hunt later. To be put suddenly on an unknown hunter, on a cold winter morning, is painful naturally in every sense. There is much similarity between that relationship of horse and rider and the relationship between a man and woman. The delicate moments as you ride out, together, but still strangers, chilly and apart in spirit—in everything except that one idea that you follow together, and because of which you are united for the day, for the hunting season, for life.

And then with movement, the terrible chill is gone, and you are warm and warming to each other. And before an hour is gone you are of the same mind. (If you were not, you would have parted company long ago.)

I went cubbing for the first time in Southern Irish country, on a morning of late August, when white mist had followed a night of soft rain. The mist lifted in places to show a sky of rose, and against it, once, a procession of cattle moved across a field with a strange unreality. The roads were wet with soft mud and long gleaming puddles, the hedges still asleep under a veil of gossamer. We rode for a while beside

a brown river which I still remember, lovely and dreamlike at that hour. It went away from us, busy on some errand of its own. Over a bridge, the road wound between low walls of grey stone, woods, and past a gap in them, through which a house looked, a long grey Irish country house grey still with sleep and peace.

The Meet—a few people and a few horses—was in a valley with bracken-covered hills either side. On one side the hill rose sharply above the road, the other, the ground and a cart track sloped through bracken again, down to the river—the same river we had seen earlier—then climbed the other side through woods, and, more steeply, to a curve against the sky.

The mist was lifting a little. Presently, but not yet, the sun would break through it. Meanwhile a horseman, half-shrouded, appeared riding towards us from over the far side of the hill and pulled up in a gap in the hedge and sat waiting, looking our way. In the mist he was like some figure of legend. So the figures moved about me, heads and shoulders—mostly shoulders as we went down to the river. Identity was lost and did not matter. It was a moment of immunity from life and from the problems that must inevitably be caused by the fact that one is oneself, and so one must deal with that fact. Now one need deal with nothing, except one's pulling horse—if one could—to keep him back from charging the others, from slipping and stumbling on the loose stones of the river. We had no identities. We were just figures in legend, close to each other and apart—with no problems except these immediate ones which took all our time and thought and blotted the others into non-existence. Dimly, I began to realise, as we splashed through the water—it was brown below us, beautifully white flecked—why people hunted and gave their

lives to it—even people who had no liking for killing cubs or grown foxes any more than I had—and so escaped from life.

We escaped, splashing out of the river again the other side and, the fresh horses taking their heads from us, galloping up the steep hill through the bracken. It was rain-wet and mist-wet and the drenched smell of it filled the air as we broke it down. The shoulders ahead of me disappeared at the top. My horse followed them through a gap into the wood. A path showed before us, narrow enough between the tree trunks. We took it, at what seemed to me terrifying speed, striking branches as we went, or they striking us. The ground below was Heaven under a horse's hoofs, deep and soft and rich with the accumulation of many years of rotting leaves sinking into the most exquisite mud. The wet leaves here smelt as strongly as the bracken. As we galloped at that mad speed on such a path, I bent my head before the branches. Lifting it I saw that the sun had come out from behind the mist and was just stealing, still veiled, through the leaves into the wood.

There was an open gate at the end of the path. Two gateposts, and against one of them my left leg was swung with a crash that I can still hear. My boots must have been good, for I never remembered it again. My horse only knew that the chestnut ahead of him was getting away, and I was a passenger as we went up the wall of the hill into the mist—but sunlit now—where a group of motionless figures waited.

All the morning the mist played its lovely tricks, lifting and falling. Out of it came a herd of black cattle with a bull in their midst, to stare at us with soft wondering eyes, blowing out their white breath on the air. Below us was a gorse-covered hill in which the business that had brought us

here—or some of us—was going on. When the sunlight came, the hound puppies who were learning their job, flashed beautifully brown and white as they came out of the gorse and strayed over the hill, and were called and brought back by the whip. We waited for a long time by that covert. In and out of the mist the horses moved or stood still as well-trained hunters should, their riders motionless, wrapped away in their own thoughts in a world of their own. But there are few well-trained hunters in Ireland on such occasions and more of them are young horses learning their job like the hound puppies. Oh, I began to know why people hunted, why they came cubbing—even when they didn't like that part of it. Sometimes a horse got impatient, was walked a few yards and swung round again, and stood, so that his rider might see between his ears what was happening in the gorse.

A lot of things were happening—now as the sunlight came, the dark green thorns shone and glistened and there were silver webs across them—as shining, as bright, as lovely, as the webs spun about our own lives, making us prisoners—here and there the dark touched with a gold bloom. A red muzzle showed for a moment between the bushes and vanished again. To our left there was a low white cottage with bright blue turf smoke rising above the thatch. It looked very comfortable and as if people were having breakfast within. From it, or from somewhere, a man in ragged clothes appeared with a stick and a red mongrel dog who got mixed up with the hounds and might easily have been mistaken for the fox.

But I saw, even better things between my horse's ears, looking farther. Down the valley and over the other side, the mist cleared from this view as though it had done that on purpose for me, for it still covered the hill behind. Across

the valley were bright green fields edged with grey stone walls. And the green was brighter because of the grey shapes of the cocks of the last after grass standing against them. The cocks were bordered with magic as the sun touched them and as Monet might have painted them—still half asleep with the sun just beginning to wake them. Beyond, there was a rich plain of many-coloured fields, stretching away to that land that tells its own story with its name—the Golden Vale. And above it, guarding sentries, the bright blue line of the Tipperary mountains, with Keeper Mountain high among them.

While they were busy in the gorse the country came clearer and the haystacks emerged from the green fields that were their background, as though they had come to ordinary life from some still painted picture. The morning was wakened fully by the sudden crying of hounds—so clear, so loud, that it must waken the world for many miles—that sound that has such sharp ecstasy and agony in it and so mingled that one cannot tell whether they cry for joy or pain. The magic hour was over and I should never hold it again—until perhaps next year on a first cubbing morning of white mist with the sun breaking through. Is that the only way to see the country and to possess it for one enchanted hour?

So I know, too, why people go hunting, even people like Siegfried Sassoon who can't like killing foxes any more than I do, and who wrote of the Limerick Hunt, after hunting with it a few times when he was stationed in Cork for a brief period during the War, that it had restored his faith in 'his capacity to be heedlessly happy.' And it is not so easy and is getting less easy in this post-war world, to be heedlessly happy.

Irish country life holds that possibility still. If you love

country and the feeling of a horse under you, how could you feel anything but content, galloping over such fields—there is even a spring in the turf that you do not find elsewhere—taking such jumps, a soft, curved, kind little bank—not as kind as it looks, and slippery if the rain has been on it?

A horse bred in this country knows how to manage it and tells you so with a flourish as you go up to it. And when he proves it beautifully, with a little triumphant kick of the hind feet that replaced the others so neatly as he took off into the air again, you share his delight in his own grace and skill. And going away across the next field at greater speed, the rider is wrapt round in the warm triumphant feeling of the bank behind him, even if ahead of him lies the stone wall.

So unlike its name, this jump, characteristic of some Irish hunting country and most characteristic of Galway—although you find it in Tipperary and in Cork as well. There is a part of Galway that is just small fields intersected with stone walls, made with the stones that they took from the fields when they were making them possible for pasture or tillage—and not very possible, I think, then. People who hunt here must at times imagine that they are on a see-saw, for they land only to take off again over the next wall and then to see another, a few yards ahead of them. Those walls have never heard of mortar and all the stones are loose, piled with some skill one upon the other. And if you should touch the top one with sufficient force, the whole wall would come down behind you with a soft crumbling noise, which, as I have heard it, is a strangely comforting sound as you go on away from it. In the country where the walls are only occasional, one has a certain beauty seen at the top of a sloping field, the long grey line of it against the sky. So that it seems as you gallop up the hill that, taking

it, you will jump right into that sky. A gate, too, frames a pale winter sky and cross-bars it, and it is not as brave a thing as it seems, to take an Irish gate, for they are not the firm gates you find in England. These, you can see from a long distance away, lean as they stand, and have only to be touched with sufficient force to fall and lie flat before you.

That mixed country, for those who have an eye for it, is the loveliest of all—little hills, deep valleys, with overflowing rivers winding through them, a stretch of brown bog always visible somewhere, bright blue hills on the horizon—for however much it rained this morning the sun is more likely than not to come out some time during the day. And if the sun did not come out, between the rain there would be moments when the hills came towards you, leaning close as if they loved you, and then they would be richest and softest green and you might lay your heart and head against them and want no other pillow for either.

There was a day when, towards evening, they ran five miles or so through such country. They had been thinking of going home when the Master turned in over the tumbled down wall to draw Davoril Wood (with Davoril House, burnt in the Troubles, a sad beautiful skeleton and ghost, watching them across the overgrown park). It was only an off-chance that there might be a fox in that once famous covert, but the chance held, and hounds went away at once, as fresh as if it was morning. With the light beginning to fade, they were lost amid the woods and trees, and one hunter was left alone in that strange atmosphere of the past.

Splashing about in the mud at the edge of the little overgrown plantation, that had been made long ago by a Davoril coming back from the Grand Tour, he would not have been surprised if he had been joined by ghostly horses and ghostly riders, who must have drawn this covert and splashed about

these woods and park long ago. Coming out of the demesne over another fallen gap in the wall, he saw figures on the road shouting and pointing, and caught up with the living Hunt, leaving the ghosts behind him. Over the little fields they went, jumping more stone walls than they could count. Banks and ditches too. There was one that might have taken less handy horses by surprise as it certainly took their riders. A double with a ditch either side, a low wall on the top. And they were all over it and ready for the next ditch with a wall above it. And in the air, prepared for the deep ditch the other side, found a drop from the top of the wall only of half a dozen inches or so, which was disconcerting.

In the twilight the hounds, showing a little weariness at last, straggled up a long gentle hill, and, going over the top, vanished from sight as if something had swallowed them. There was a quarry the other side, in which the fox had gone to earth, and well he deserved it. That long sloping hill which leaves one country behind, keeps its secret of what lies the other side. So that horses and riders, galloping a little slowly and straggling like the hounds they followed, came suddenly over the edge of it and saw below them the whole thirty miles length and three miles width of the lake, and the great many-coloured plain to the left of it, and the distant mountains making a circle round them. It was just the hour before dusk fell and the rainy sky had broken in the west to the long streak of yellow that comes so often at twilight. It made its own reflection in the lake, which elsewhere was still and grey, and the vivid colours of the Ormond plain and the mountains softened and fused as though a grey veil lay over them. Down below in the valley the little grey country town was beginning to turn on the lights from the Shannon.

Sitting on that ridge and looking about them, the last

riders began to remember how far they had come from home. One of them had hacked to a Meet and was going to hack back and that was thirty-six miles without hunting at all. The gallant little horse that had carried him with a heart as keen and joyous as his own, all day, had a streak of the Connemara pony in him which accounted for many things, great hardiness, an indifference to comfort, as great as that of the Connemara people who have never known such a thing, wonderful cleverness with his feet over those surprising jumps that never take him by surprise. And an unconquerable spirit that, at the end of the long ride home under the winter moon when it had risen, made him shy dutifully at the black shadow the gate-post threw over the silver, as they rode through it to his stable ; although he knew very well what it was. He is a gentleman too, showing no feeling of the unfairness of it when on the way home he is put for a few minutes into a cold stable with an empty manger and left there while his master has warmth and comfort for a few minutes and a brief glass of refreshment before taking the road again, out of the town, and across the bridge of the Shannon, from Connaught into Munster. Still the little horse will trot with intervals of walking, refusing to be tired even after such a day. And the road that night might have lured him on, for it was silver with the moon, and the trees throwing black patterns of delicate lace work across it. When they went across the wide bog that supplies the turf for all that neighbourhood and which is a hive of business with men and carts in the turf-cutting season, the moon was in all the black bog pools and touching the walls of a little cottage out in the middle of it. There is a point soon after this where the road turns right up a hill and over a hill, and there is the lake and the Ormond plain again, and both seem to belong entirely, every inch of them, to a man who

rides this way at night after a hunting day that can't have been less than fifty miles.

With this thought, it is here that a man not accustomed to singing otherwise—except in his bath—bursts into song and whistling as he walks his horse down the hill. There is a river that just touches the road at the point where a man must sing if he knows how to, or even if he doesn't. The river makes its own presence known, even without the moon to catch the water, and a singing voice cannot drown it. But in any case a horse knows that it is there. He will slow down imperceptibly and just turn his head that way, indicating that he has need of refreshment too. But so delicately is the hint conveyed and with such good breeding, that it may be ignored if his rider chooses.

After such a day, all seems surprisingly well with the world. And the problems that mattered yesterday have been left behind on the wind. And a man who has ridden fifty miles and taken such jumps that no one—sitting by a fire—would believe, and only he and his horse remembering, and their memories, holding so many, getting a little confused—in the stable munching the evening feed of oats, so well earned, or by the library fire—that he might be doubtful himself if an unbeliever were to scoff, so perhaps he'll say nothing about it, blinking by the fire, except that it was a good day.

IN HARLEY STREET.

*In London lies a curveless street,
 The houses watchfully austere ;
 No windows here
 With stock displayed the strangers greet,
 All as eye-shunning nuns discreet.*

*Inscribed on every panelled door
 In letters trim are single names
 Of wide-spread fames,
 Of risen healers three or four,
 Or of the rising half a score.*

*Like bees enclustered here they hive,
 Their work all one in divers ways
 Throughout their days ;
 Along this street's straight length they strive
 To keep the ethereal spark alive.*

*The sum of mortal ills they hear,
 All fleshly tribulations laid
 On man and maid ;
 They grapple with the gales of Fear,
 And into port the wrecks they steer.*

*By them the springs of Joy are fed,
 Earth's simplest melodists they prove
 To anxious Love :
 They bring again a freedom fled ;
 They halt Ambition's heedless tread.*

*They probe the secrets of despair ;
Like sudden sunshine, Life's reprieve
With one they leave,
And bid another stoutly dare
To dodge awhile Death's outflung snare.*

*Just as of old the ailing came
About Bethesda's pool, to-day
They come this way,
The heirs of agony and maim,
Diseased, distressed, torn, worn, and lame.*

*Here come complainants' fuss and fret,
The trivial ache, the tedious tale,
The coward's wail—
And strength, faith, patience that have met
All evil and will triumph yet.*

*Here are the wardens of mankind,
And all mankind they pass in view
As judges too,
But each with unemotional mind
Against Life's enemies aligned.*

*Behind these windows all the day
The anguish and the quest are known
To them alone ;
Victors or vanquished, they obey
Unceasingly the warrior's way.*

*This is the street, the street of Pain,
To which the suffering world must come,
Vocal or dumb :
It leaves in hope and Death's disdain
Or battling on in vain, in vain.*

*This is the quarrying-ground, the pit
Wherein with direful strokes is hewed
Man's fortitude,
Where terrors, pities, mercies flit
And, soul-enthroned, the splendours sit.*

GORELL.

OLD ITALIAN RITES.

BY MARION STANCIOFF.

I

THE SERPENT SAINT.

IN the mountains of Abruzzi, not far from Sulmona, is the village of Cocullo, in which a festival takes place on the first Thursday in May each year, that is anthropologically and religiously of profound interest.

On the day of the feast the small town is full of pilgrims, come on foot or muleback over mountain tracks from distant villages in order to obtain protection against, or cure of snakebite, hydrophobia, and toothache. The local Saint Dominic who dispenses these graces antedates his more famous namesake by half a dozen centuries, and very little appears to be known of him except that he worked miraculous cures of these ills. Here and there in the crowd one sees boys and men carrying grass snakes twisted around their wrists and everywhere pedlars selling charms against toothache and hydrophobia and snakebite. The charms are either twisted bits of iron or long strings of cotton to wear around the wrist. In both cases it is legitimate to assume that the former are summary representations of snakes, while the latter are perhaps also snakes, or perhaps, the sacred 'filets' of antiquity. The many colourfully clad pilgrims flock to the church where high mass is to be said at eleven. Before mass begins many of the peasants cross the church on their knees to the statue of the Saint (a modern plaster statue of a black-clad, bearded monk, with a reliquary

opening in his chest and a horse-shoe in his hand) and rub their serpents, enclosed for the purpose in little white bags, their strings, or other charms, and even clothing against it. Some go to a little bell fastened on the church wall facing the saint and seizing the cord in their teeth clang the bell as a preventative against toothache.

The dome and apse of the church, badly wrecked by an earthquake in 1913, still bear plaster reliefs of biblical scenes, in all of which snakes play a part, and in the four angles of the dome are tablets bearing scriptural quotations (Isaiah and Luke, etc.) concerning power over serpents. In the scene (apse) of the casting out of the first pair from Eden, God is pictured as brandishing a serpent menacingly at the transgressors. I am told by a friend who witnessed the feast twenty years ago that at that time the altar itself was covered with writhing snakes throughout the mass; but this has since been forbidden by the higher religious authorities. Certainly when I witnessed the ceremony (1935) there were no snakes on the altar, but the sermon was full of reference to them. The cheerful-looking parish priest, obviously enjoying himself, expatiated at length on the amazing thaumaturgic and intercessory powers of his saint, saying he was undoubtedly the brightest star in the celestial constellation, with which his audience seemed emphatically to agree.

Immediately after mass the saint's procession began to form inside the church. All the statues belonging to the church took part in it. First came a fine early-renaissance cross. Then a statue of St. Nicholas, then St. Agatha, with her breast on a dish, then an eighteenth-century statue of Mother and Child, formerly also draped with snakes, I am told, in a great blue cloak, looking surprisingly like a Mater Matuta, then came another cross, then a priest under a kind

of parasol of eighteenth-century brocade, carrying a reliquary which I am told contains a tooth of the Saint. Then came two fine-looking girls in Sunday clothes carrying on their heads baskets gaily decked with pieces of stuff and red paper roses, each containing two great flat round cakes, with a hole in the middle and sprinkled with sugar. Then at last came the Saint himself. He was carried by four men (while all the other statues had been carried, Abbruzese fashion, by women), who stopped just beyond the threshold of the Church. At this moment a number of men and boys who had been waiting crowded round the statue, and began to hand the live, though apparently apathetic, serpents through the halo, through the horseshoe he held in his left and through the crook he held in his right hand, making this look like a caduceus; and round and round his feet and through the rococo decoration of the base on which he was carried, they twined the writhing slipping creatures. One of the snakes was discovered to be dead and was therefore hastily thrown away. One or two slid off and the crowd scattered looking down at their feet and laughing; the truants were caught and flung around the Saint once more.

At last, when all was ready, the procession started off, with the relic, the cakes and the serpent-covered statue as the centre of attention and twining up the steep little street reached finally an open place at the top of the village. Arrived at this point the saint's face was turned toward a spot on the other side of the little valley where two experts were letting off fireworks in his honour. This was the climax of the feast, and after escorting the saint back to the church, where the serpents were removed, the peasants scattered to go back to their homes, taking their snakes with them, some keeping them, some releasing them in the fields. We were told that the cakes were divided and given

to the boys who make a speciality—which some told us was a hereditary monopoly—of catching the snakes for the feast.

II.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE PODESTA AND THE TREE.

Before describing the ceremony of the Tree-Marriage, I must insist that it is surrounded with an atmosphere of embarrassed yet obstinate jealousy by those who regularly attend it, which increases the difficulty of gathering information as much as it increases confidence in its authenticity.

Having discovered, thanks to much persistence, the date upon which the feast is annually held—May 8th—from a *stranger* residing in Vetralla, we received a telephone message on the 7th to the effect that the feast had not been held for many years and that it was useless our coming on the morrow as we would find nothing. We chanced it, however, and went to the place which our ‘outsider’ informant had indicated. Three kilometres from Cura, by Vetralla, in the midst of a large and obviously ancient oak forest stands the little Passionist Monastery of *St. Angelo*. It was built in the first half of the eighteenth century on the site of an earlier chapel and above a *grotto* on a small hill. These facts and the dedication to that anonymous spirit ‘*St. Angelo*’ point to the antiquity of the site as a cult-centre.

When we arrived, at about eight-thirty, the guest-room of the Monastery was already packed with peasants—who had come from all over the surrounding country-side on mule and on foot, refreshing themselves with bread and red wine which they bade us share, while they shouted and sang and made merry. At the bottom of the cypress and box (the latter attaining in some cases about three and a half metres) avenue which leads down from the monastery, we found a circular clearing in the forest around two large trees

(one an oak—not ilex—and one apparently a *beech*?). Each tree was decked to a height of about three metres with ginestra and *erica mediterranea*. Upon one of them the axe and fasces of the lictors made of rustic wood was hung, and there were several of the *milizia forestale* about, giving an almost too strong suggestion of continuity through the ages. A table with a gay patchwork cover and a chair had been placed at the foot of the larger tree. The militiamen whom we asked for details said with an air both shy and solemn that the ‘wedding’ had ‘always’ taken place, and that until three years ago (that is until 1932) there had been a nuptial mass said under the trees by the priests from the monastery, but that this had now been forbidden; that now mass was said in the church and the ‘marriage’ took place under the trees after the mass. We asked them their opinion of the ceremony’s meaning. One said that it was enacted yearly in order to maintain possession of the forest to the community of Vetralla, and if it were neglected the whole lands would pass into the ownership of Viterbo. Another said it was not this, but that the two trees were married to each other, and that for the marriage to be a ‘good’ one the trees must be ‘mature’ but not ‘too old.’ He said that in a few years one of the present trees would be too old and they would have to choose a new one to take its place. He also said that there was an ancient tree, too old to be married, but to which he seemed to attach mysterious importance because of its girth (it takes six men holding hands to encompass it), and he offered to lead us to it. As it appeared from his account to be some distance away and it was nearing eleven o’clock we preferred to return to the church where high mass was about to be sung.

By this time the crowd had swelled to about a hundred people, part of whom squeezed into the little church, while

the younger part remained under the 'betrothed trees' to play various games. As soon as the Podesta, accompanied by various local notables and by a notary, had arrived—by car—mass was begun. The Podesta was festively received and assisted at mass seated upon a decorated chair, and then received communion very solemnly. Immediately thereafter he led the way down to the clearing followed by everyone, young and old. It was now twelve o'clock. The Notary sat down under the larger tree and unrolling a document dated 1868 began to read it out loud. During this time the Podesta stood sheepish and blushing beside the table, listening intently to the distinctly uninteresting legal paper—merely a definition of the boundaries of the forests owned by the community and a repetition of its right to these possessions. After this had been read and the mayor had signed it, the Notary said: 'Would anyone like to sign the register as witness of the marriage?' And after some people had done so and a pause ensued he said, '*la cerimonia è finita*,' whereupon the crowd gave a spontaneous heartfelt cry of '*Viva gli sposi*,' and began to dance and shout again. At this point the Podesta, pink with embarrassment, came over to the small group of 'outsiders' saying: 'We now have a simple banquet in the woods and if the distinguished guests would care to join us and drink our healths we shall be very honoured . . .' and then apologetically, 'this is a very old ceremony, and we always have a feast afterwards.' Partly his obvious *verlegenheit* and partly lack of time caused us to decline the invitation to this wedding feast and so we learned no more—if there was anything more to learn about this curious ceremony.

Perhaps the most striking thing about it all was the contrast between the elaborate ritual of preparation and the dry poverty of the document actually read, proving, it seems

to me, the aetiological origin of this document as a purely 'rational' substitute for a genuine marriage ceremony of magic significance to which recent generations have lost the key, without, however, losing entirely the sense of the mystic necessity in its performance.

III.

THE SANTISSIMA TRINITA.

(Each year on the feast of the Holy Trinity peasants from the Ciociaria Lazio and Abbruzzi go on pilgrimage—to the number of about thirty thousand—to the rock *Sanctuary of the Trinity* above Vallepietra.)

Darkness had fallen over the sober magnificence of the mountain landscape before our caravan reached Vallepietra. The tired mules had to pick their way between innumerable figures that lay sleeping all along the narrow street. Every corner and cranny held a sleeping form; propped against houses, bent double on doorsteps, leaning against one another, prone on dangerously narrow parapets, or simply flat in the dust of the roadway, which seemed by the sanctity of the occasion to have been mysteriously purified.

Those of the pilgrims who were already on their way back from the shrine had decorated their heads with paper flowers of the brightest colours imaginable, chiefly vermilion and cyclamen pink threaded with scraps of tinsel, and mixed with them waving plumes of greeny white grasses, and some held staffs that broke into garish blossom at the top. In the uncertain light of the few street lamps, the sleeping-flower-decked heads looked Polynesian almost; the spectacle was fantastic as a dream and shared the peculiarly intense reality of dreams. The church was full of sleeping and praying women. We watched them a while, admiring the splendid ease with which they did both; and as we stood

there we heard a loud report. In an instant all those women were on their feet looking toward the door and shouting : '*È venuta, è venuta, è venuta la Santissima Trinità,*' their voices vibrant with joy. We streamed out of the church with them, and down the steep street which was now crammed with intensely wakeful people, to the edge of the village where men were letting off fireworks.

From here a dark hill beyond Vallepietra became visible to us, woven with a moving zigzag pattern of golden light. Slowly a procession of candlebearing priests and peasants unwound out of the silent night into the brightness and noise of the village street. As they came close we saw that they bore a banner upon which were painted three figures, exactly identical, dressed in red and blue robes and holding three open books in their three right hands, their three left hands raised in blessing. The entrance of the banner into the village was acclaimed with redoubled fireworks and united cries of : '*eviva, eviva, eviva la Santissima Trinità.*' After the banner came a large cross, Christless, just a figuration of two rustic trunks, crossed and twined with a vine, but made—for lightness I suppose—of tin, moulded and painted. There followed another banner of the Holy Trinity, this time the peasants dressed entirely in white and sitting in a semicircle instead of a row, without the books, but with a Lamb, an Eye in a Triangle, and a Dove to distinguish them.

Then followed a strange group. About twenty girls, ranging from infancy to maturity, wearing shabby white dresses and veils, came slowly forward, each one bearing in her hands an instrument of the Passion. The nails, the rope, the whip, the column, the robe, the crown of thorns, the lance, were some we recognised. One child had a light fixed on her head, but we could not find out what it meant ; and one of

the older girls was draped in black, instead of white, to represent the virgin. Another cross followed and there came peasants carrying torches and candles, and then the rest of the crowd flowed in behind, merging with the procession and the whole town took up the chant '*Eviva, sempre viva le tre devin Persone* etc.' to a strange rather mournful tune.

It was past midnight now and we had over three hours' walk in front of us next morning, so we retired to the beds we had engaged in a well-to-do peasant's house. Leaving orders to be called at half-past two we fell asleep in our surprisingly clean and comfortable rooms. But through my sleep, which seemed to go on for ever though it lasted less than three hours, I kept hearing bursts of that haunting refrain '*Eviva, Eviva la Santissima Trinità*' . . . There was something both restful and exciting—truly refreshing—in this unconscious knowledge that throughout the night prayer was being kept uninterruptedly at the same pitch of exaltation.

They were still singing when we started off in the dark to walk to the Shrine, and all along the rough path during the three hours' climb we passed little groups singing the same refrain. Presently the dawn came and we saw the summit of Monte Antore—the highest peak in that neighbourhood—grow red, and beheld for the first time the objective toward which we climbed. We were enclosed in a deep narrow valley, that widened out at the farther end where it was closed by a great wall of a mountain. About threequarters of the way up, a narrow shelf cut across the rock and to this the thousands of minute figures scattered along the paths were all converging. As we drew nearer I could hear, beside the pounding of my heart from the climb, roars of '*Eviva*,' and could see the crowd swaying along the narrow ledge above.

I did not reach it until after six o'clock, but it still lay in the shadow of a mountain on the east. The dense crowd was struggling to get to the little flight of steps leading to the shrine. This was a shallow cave hollowed from the rock and protected in front by a wall from which a small iron balcony projected, about three yards above the ground. We struggled for some time to get near the steps, but it was impossible, and we retired, discouraged, to a rock some distance away, for fear we should be pushed into the ravine by the over-energetic Carabinieri who were supposed to be keeping order. This was the only intervention of organised authority and yet the whole crowd from beginning to end was notable for its order and dignity. 'An argument in favour of a theocratic society' as a member of our party remarked.

We succeeded after about an hour in getting into the tiny chapel. It cannot have been more than five metres square. Above the altar a sheet of glass was fixed against the rock which reflected the light of the candles in its dusty surface almost hiding all trace of the painting which it is its function to protect. We peered at it through the iron cage which surrounds the altar, trying to discover the period of the painting, which we had to be content with assuming to be of Byzantine type.

As I was staring up at the picture I became aware of a strange sound close beside me. A kind of gurgling and grunting followed by a raucous cry. Then I noticed a group of peasants a few feet away. A big youth knelt, clutching the bars that surrounded the altar, and behind him his family, all making gestures of supplication. An old man drew some coins from his pocket and threw them on the altar where they fell with a clink on the others already heaped there. The big youth wrung the bars yet more insistently

and the grunts grew more stringent. It was only then I realised that the inhuman sounds came from the muscular throat of the peasant youth. A bystander explained that three days before a dumb man had been miraculously cured there, so this family had come full of hope that their son too would be cured. Just at this moment, however, the Carabinieri came in ordering the church to be cleared for the '*Pianto delle Zitelle*,' or 'Maiden's Lament,' which is the climax of the festival. For a moment the dumb man's grunts reached a higher key, he wrenched at the bars as if to wrench consent from Heaven, his family bent in renewed intensity of prayer; the grunts became almost words, we distinguished the syllables '*par-lar*' in the inchoate rush of sound that came from the thick lips, and for a breathless instant hope hovered in our hearts. Then the Carabinieri tapped the old man on the shoulder. In an instant the whole group had come out of their exaltation and crossing themselves they began to melt away; the youth gave a last howl and a last shake to the bars and then descending to simple work-a-day ways humbly kissed the irons he had been tearing at, and with eyes resigned and serene stepped silently out of the church.

We were so shaken by this scene that it was several moments before we noticed that we too had left the church and were standing on the steps outside looking out over the heads of the crowd gone suddenly quiet. Then we heard faint singing in the distance; but a different song this time, a strange cadence with a break in the middle and a sharp fall at the end. It grew steadily stronger and soon we saw the '*Zitelle*,' the white-clad maidens of the night before, debouch from the rocky path that they had followed, like ourselves from Vallepietra. They came in slow procession along the edge of the cliff while the silent multitude pressed back

respectfully against the rock. The girls still bore the symbols of the Passion, and as they approached singing their plaintive song we saw that they carried something else, they had not borne the day before. It was a bier on which lay a plaster statue of Our Lord with bleeding wounds and scattered with purple flowers. They came up the steps beside us and into the Church where they deposited the bier, and then stepped out on to the little iron balcony where the Bishop of Anagni was awaiting them. The first girl raised up the big wooden nails she held and sang, always in that queer broken cadence 'We are the nails that pierced his hands, Woe is us, woe is us . . .' and after her verses were finished, the next girl sang 'I am the lance that pierced His Side, O woe is me, woe . . .' and so on until the instruments of the Passion had all confessed their sorrowful part. Then came the Magdalen whose song was the most moving of all and then the Virgin sang and then Martha taking our Lord's Body from the cross. The most curious thing about it was the way in which the rhythm of the lament was broken after every single verse by the crowd shouting in unison (as if it were a response, though nothing could have been less related to the song): '*Eviva, Eviva la Santissima Trinità.*'

Just as the last verses of the lament were being sung the first ray of sun reached our end of the rock-ledge. That field of reverent heads, bowed to receive the bishop's blessing that ended the ceremony, seemed to take fire; each of those many thousand crowns of paper flowers flared out in a sudden glow of clear pink, or scarlet or yellow, each of those thousands of waving grass plumes received a soft halo from the sun, till the whole mass of human beings seemed to have brought forth from the rich soil of their enthusiasm this extravagant crop of supernatural vegetation. There came a final more than ever heartfelt roar of '*Eviva la Santissima*

Trinità,’ and then the crowd began to break up, and it was as if all those exotic flowers were being ploughed under. We watched the dissolution of this beauty for a moment and then regretfully pulled ourselves together and with many backward looks started down hill on our way home.

Neither the scorching sun nor the excitement nor lack of sleep seemed able to check the pilgrims’ enthusiasm. The whole way to Vallepiera we overtook little groups singing the song of the Holy Trinity ; and at a bridge we came to, whence one could see the Sanctuary for the last time many of the people stopped and picking up big stones threw them into the stream as a simulacrum of the sins they would be rid of, while they invoked the name of the most Holy Trinity.

The day before we had seen people crossing another bridge on the way up—between Arcinazzo and Vallepiera—on their knees and conjectured that a primitive water-cult may have been the pre-Christian root of this ceremony.

We were careful, however, throughout the festival to come to no conclusions except those immediately warranted by the facts before us. For it is temptingly easy to make Adonis-Attis parallels, but it is also dangerous. We had been told, for instance, that the grass plumes which the pilgrims wore were cultivated in little pots and then allowed to dry like the gardens of Adonis. But the peasants I asked said the grasses were wild and grew near the Sanctuary. There is an unscientifically hasty credulity in many folklore fanciers which inevitably leads them astray. ‘The Golden Bough’ is an easy one to get hanged on, particularly if we go about Absalom-like with a mane of long theories to entangle us.

Bulgaria.

THE FIRST SWALLOW.

BY PETER FABRIZIUS.

I AM the first Austrian who set foot on English soil after the resignation of the late Federal Chancellor of Austria, Schuschnigg.

That was on March 11, 1938. It was about 7.20 in the evening ; we were sitting over our evening meal and the wireless happened to be on : it was that lucky chance that led to everything that followed.

The programme was suddenly interrupted and we heard a voice we knew—Schuschnigg's voice—saying those last words which were translated and printed in the Press of the entire world, except in the Press of the country in which they were uttered. There, they were never published.

The voice told us the whole thing had been falsified from start to finish, that he had had to succumb to force. The final words were, ' God help Austria.'

For a little while we sat stunned. My father stared unseeingly in front of him. My younger brother looked at me. My mother, who had never broken down before in her life, was crying softly.

' This is the end,' I said. I got up and went to my room to pack my things. I had decided to clear out at once, give up my position and my home and leave my ruined country. I knew there was no more room in this country for a man who had always frankly written what he believed to be right and who intended to go on doing so. A country where books are burnt is no place for a man who may want to write just that kind of book himself. Besides, I was not

at all sure that the new lords and masters might not discover something that was not to their taste in what I had already written ; in any case, I did not want to risk it. So it was clear to me that I should have to go out into the world as a pioneer, make a new life for myself and, if I was successful, get my family to join me later.¹

‘Mother,’ I called through the door, ‘would you telephone to the Western Railway and ask when the next train leaves for London?’

As I went on with my packing I could hear my mother’s voice on the telephone. ‘Nine thirty-five? Oh, that’s too soon. When is the next . . .’

‘That’s all right,’ I called to her. ‘Get Father to call me a taxi. Here’s the key of my desk ; you’ll find some English money I’ve had ready for some time. Would you get it for me, please?’

In a few more minutes my packing was done and the taxi was at the door. ‘Good-bye, Mother,’ I said, ‘I don’t know when we shall see each other again. But when I’ve got across the frontier I’ll see how I can manage to get you all away.’

I kissed her hurriedly—there was no time to lose. My father, who was seeing me off, told the chauffeur to drive to the Westbahn. There were crowds out in the streets and we had difficulty in getting through them, though we were in a hurry to catch the train. ‘Better go by side-streets even if it means a longer way round.’ My father promised the driver a good tip if he got us to the station in time for the train.

Chattering crowds. Everyone hurrying about aimlessly and shouting.

‘Have you got money on you?’ my father asked.

¹ *This I have now managed to do.*

‘Yes, sixteen pounds and two hundred Austrian schillings. One is allowed to take that much money out of the country.’

Was it still allowed, though, I wondered? But I kept my doubts to myself.

The taxi pulled up abruptly. We were just coming out of a side-street to cross a main thoroughfare when the way was blocked by a procession. It was an organised contingent of motor-cyclists in precise and orderly formation—only half an hour since the *débâcle*. The procession was headed by a motor-car with two men in it, one at the wheel and the other holding aloft a great red banner with a glaring white swastika.

That is the only swastika banner I have ever seen. The display of such emblems had been forbidden in Austria for some years past. Occasionally small swastikas had been found here and there in defiance of the ban, but they had always been removed from the streets at once. And now all of a sudden here was one, huge, blatant, waving in the evening breeze and lit up by the street lamps, held high by a frenziedly gesticulating man. It seemed to break into the night like the roar of some escaped beast of prey.

The only Nazi flag I have ever seen in my life. But I shall never forget it. I had pulled up my coat collar, and we waited in silence, with the engine running, for the procession to pass. It took a long time and I kept looking at my watch.

At last there was a short space between two sections of the procession. The driver shot through just in time.

It was very late when we got to the station. There were only a few people about. But inside the booking-hall there was a small crowd of people who had hurried away, like me, in good time. The booking-clerk was only just opening the shutter.

Two young, shabbily dressed suburbanites with swastika armlets were hanging about the hall, but they did not seem to have any official duties.

About twenty people queued up to take tickets. They did not talk much, but their voices shook with excitement though everyone was trying to appear calm and unconcerned. The clerk was more flustered than any of the travellers. Evidently he himself had only heard the message over the wireless a few minutes ago and was not quite sure how he ought to behave. Tickets to issue unexpectedly to twenty people—that was a pretty complicated business, as in Austria tickets had largely to be written out by hand and the fare calculated. As a rule people booked for foreign travel at the agencies and not direct at the station. Only seven minutes till the train was due to leave.

‘Plenty of time,’ I remarked coolly to my father. But inwardly I was itching to thrust aside the two men who were ahead of me in the queue. In due course I received my ticket and paid my fare to London.

Leaning out of the carriage window, I exchanged a few more casual words with my father. It was nearly dark down there where he stood, but he kept his hat well down over his eyes. ‘Send us a telegram when you get to Basle,’ he said.

An ear-splitting yell came from the open space before the station. ‘Heil Hit-ler ! Sieg Heil ! Sieg Heil ! Sieg Heil !’ There were hundreds shouting it, thousands. It sounded like the howling of wolves. The yelling rose and fell and rose again like a tide. ‘Sieg Heil ! Sieg Heil !’

The train pulled out.

‘Sieg Heil !’ howled the wolves. ‘Sieg Heil !’

The train rolled on, my father’s figure disappeared, but the yelling voices still sounded in my eardrums. Those

shouts were the last sound I heard in the city where I had spent my childhood and thirty years of my life.

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Besides myself, there were three men in my compartment, all travelling separately : a fat man who passed most of the time sleeping—or apparently sleeping—in his corner ; a little dark fellow who gave the Hitler salute out of the window each time we passed through a station ; and opposite me an elderly man with refined, artistic features. Perhaps he had been shell-shocked in the war, as his hands were very shaky.

No one said a word. I took down my suitcase and got out all the certificates, letters and documents that might possibly, for any imaginable reason, lead to trouble. There was nothing of a political nature, but all the same I tore all the papers into fragments and got rid of them in the lavatory. Then I took the badge of the Fatherland Front out of my button-hole and threw it out of the window when no one was looking. I expect there were a good many of those badges on the railway line that night.

The elderly man smoked continuously. He had a violin-case with him and no other luggage whatever.

We stopped at a station. Here there was one man in complete S.A. uniform with the Storm Trooper's cap and brown shirt. There were also a few men wearing armlets running about and assiduously greeting one another with 'Heil Hitler.' The little dark fellow went to the window and gave the Hitler salute ostentatiously.

There was ice on the line and two train officials were busy hacking it away. 'A lot of ice about,' remarked one of them, 'sure to be a breakdown.' 'We shall never get beyond Salzburg,' said the other. 'The German troops are

marching in there at two in the morning, and that will be that.'

The elderly man was drumming on his knee with trembling fingers. He had no cigarettes left. I realised it was fear that made him tremble. I gave him a couple of cigarettes. He took them with such fervent thanks that I might have given him some costly present.

The train went on. There was no light in the compartment. The old man began to moan, his face buried in his hands. He thought no one could see him. I offered him some aspirin, and in the dark he pressed my hand with an embarrassing show of emotion.

It was a horrible night. In the early morning we arrived at Innsbrück.

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A man with a Nazi armlet came into our compartment and asked for our passports. 'Where are you going to?' he asked the old man. 'To Zurich—I am giving a concert—I am a musician—there is my violin—you see I'm giving a concert—in Zurich—my violin—a musician——' He kept repeating the same thing and was obviously terrified out of his wits.

The Nazi returned all our passports and went.

That went off all right, we thought.

The door opened, the Nazi came back accompanied by another in a leather coat. 'Which is the musician?' asked the newcomer.

My *vis-à-vis* turned a shade paler, and I could hardly breathe for suspense. He got up, trembling. 'Yes, musician, violinist.'

'All right, all right. Take your violin. You've got to get out.'

With shaking hands he reached down the violin case, while the second Nazi turned to the sleepy fat man in the other corner and asked to see his passport again. He looked inside it, then said, 'You, too, get down your luggage and come along with me.'

So now there remained only the little dark man who kept on giving the Nazi salute, and myself.

The Nazi turned to the little fellow and demanded his passport. I got a glimpse of the name—a typically Jewish one; and I guessed all his show of saluting had been nothing but a ruse.

'You must get out too.'

Now I was the only one left. The official barely glanced at me; he did not demand to see my passport again and went out. What the rules of the game were I had no idea, and I have never been able to find out.

For an endless time I sat alone and the train did not move on. What could be happening to the other three? What would happen to me? Who was the old man with the delicate hands? I wondered if he would still be alive the next day.

After an eternity, the train started on its way again. It was a tremendous event. I was still alone—none of the others had come back.

.

We were passing through the Tirol and I made my farewells. That was my country. How could it be that some stranger could come along and simply say, 'Get out'?

Good-bye, St. Anton! Good-bye, Vorarlberg! Good-bye to school, youth, friends. Good-bye, Austria—gone for ever—'Ostmark' from now on.

The door opened and the elderly man came in. I drew

a deep breath and welcomed him with my eyes. He said nothing and settled himself in his old place.

The door opened and the fat man came in. He did exactly as the first had done.

The door did not open a third time.

A few more stations, then Customs examination, foreign exchange examination, passport inspection. But this time it was old Austrian officials on the job, not Nazis, and everything was done briskly. Then came the frontier—Buchs—we were in Switzerland.

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I was dog-tired. Below on the platform were railway officials in unfamiliar uniform. *Swiss* officials.

Swiss officials !

It was an indescribable sensation. We rushed to buy Swiss newspapers and change our last Austrian money. Then the train rolled on into Switzerland. And the engine drummed out 'Switzerland, Switzerland, Switzerland !'

My old friend smiled. 'Please tell me,' I said softly, 'who are you? Aren't you really a musician?'

He drew out his passport. It bore the name of a painter, a master of his art, famous throughout the world.

'What did they do to you?'

He made a weary gesture. 'They didn't find anything.'

'Had you any valuables on you?'

He smiled again and produced a pocket-book full of picture postcards—ordinary picture postcards. Reproductions of his paintings.

'That is my fortune,' he said. 'That is all I have brought across the frontier.'

'And the skill of your hand,' I added.

He selected a card. 'In memory of an unforgettable

night,' he wrote on it, and gave it to me. I shall always value that memento.

That fat man was wide awake now. 'They took me down to the police station,' he told us. 'I have a wife and child in Vienna, and I had every scrap of my money with me in notes,' he named a very big sum, 'here in my shoe. I had worked fifty years to pile up that fortune, and I meant to use it to start a new life for my family abroad. If they had found it I should be in a Concentration Camp now, not sitting in the train.' He gave a rather silly laugh. 'But they didn't find it, though they made me strip to the skin. I'd thrown the money away before. The entry of the police station was fairly dark and I stopped behind a pillar to tie up my shoelace, see? All my money is in an envelope propped up behind that pillar. The charwoman who finds it won't have to work any more for the rest of her days. They didn't find a thing on me. I got rid of every bit of money. What a stroke of luck!'

The great painter left us at Zurich.

At the French frontier I shared out my luggage, as most of the others had hardly brought anything with them and did not want to look too much like refugees at the outset.

Nearly all of them stopped in France. As far as I know there were only two men besides myself who went on to England; if there should be a fourth, I am willing to admit I am wrong.

One of the two others, a solicitor from Vienna, broke his journey at Paris, meaning to go on later by air. The other, an actor, came on with me. He was very anxious when we disembarked at Folkestone in case he should meet with difficulties and not be allowed to enter the country. Although in those days Austrians did not need a visa for England, still they had to satisfy the Immigration Officer as to the intended

length of their stay and so forth. Besides, one had to have a certain amount of money, and the actor had practically none.

And so it happened as he had feared. My fellow traveller was sent back to France. I was the only one left.

Thus it came about that I was the first swallow—the harbinger of an endless stream that is still flowing in.

When the train pulled in to Victoria Station, the long journey was ended. But the other, longer journey was only beginning.

SWORD AND MASK.

*Once war was glorious, a most god-like game—
Locked ranks, fierce hoofs and swords, a flag unfurled;
Men fought for fine ironic things like fame,
Or Helen's face, or rule of all the world.
Now, for dull tales about democracy,
I must prepare for something bestial, low,
Bitter and unrestrained—O God, there'll be
No beauty left, no light: and yet I know
The drums will beat, the men will march and sing,
And I, deluded fool, will think it war,
And with high thoughts mock death and suffering,
Drunk with the smell of wine drunk long before:
Pray Christ in mercy keep me drunk, that I
May shout 'Saint George for England' as I die.*

MICHAEL RIVIÈRE:

MATER DOLOROSA.

BY J. GEDDES.

SHE had brought Ellenora up to hospital only a week ago—it seemed years, but it was only a week ago, and her money was nearly done. Well, she would have to go back now, she couldn't put it off any longer.

She had always paid her way and had a little over beside—a little put by for Ellenora's wedding. That was all gone too, now; ah God, do funerals always cost one so much more than weddings?

Yes, she would need to go back to the country now, but without Ellenora, and that seemed so extraordinary, so impossible a thing, a strange terrible mistake, not really so, not without Ellenora—that would be leaving the whole of her life behind her.

Yet always Ellenora had been a thing apart, something removed, elevated, poised, always a little above her. How she had loved that child—loved her with her whole soul, her whole body. Yet always she had felt that little fine remoteness, as if she had borne a princess under her plain heart and never guessed it. Well, Ellenora had loved her too, thank God—there was no doubt of that; in spite of all her drab grey earthiness, Ellenora had loved her.

All the spring flowers, denied herself, blossomed for her, in the child's heart—why, she was a flower herself—and the noise, the din of the streets, died away; soft as a little wild river, fell the voice of Ellenora . . .

Someone pushed rudely against her; it didn't do to get

thinking in the crowd. Everyone was so hurried, everyone had such important business, everyone had a place to go to. Yet when a big bus blundered up close to the pavement where she stood and she saw Hyde Park Corner written on it, she suddenly climbed in ; or did the people just push her in before them ? Well, at any rate, it would be a rest and only cost a penny or two ; but she couldn't sit down after all, the bus was quite full, but had to stand swaying about and holding the leather strap very tight in case she should fall against someone, some important person, who really meant to be in the bus, who really was going somewhere.

She took her ticket to Hyde Park Corner. A park was a place where you could sit down, yes, even though it were cold, no one could stop you sitting there, surely ? It seemed a long way, a very good twopence-worth. The bus was so crowded she could not see out at all, and when she looked down she saw a pair of small high-heeled shoes and they reminded her of the last thing she had ever bought for Ellenora—a little pair of slippers. They had seen them the last time they went to Rochester together and the child had taken such a fancy to them. They were gay little shoes with buckles and high red heels and, of course, Ellenora had never had high heels before—just plain serviceable black strap shoes and these were not at all suitable ; yet though Ellenora was always a good child when denied a thing she wanted, something that had got into the child's face of late, a little dim foreshadowing, a little fear, had made her buy the slippers for her.

And how pleased and proud she had been, trying them on every now and again and wrapping them carefully away in their white tissue paper and laying the box on the top shelf of the cupboard, going back to look at them every

little while. The night before they had come up to hospital she had put them out on top of the kitchen dresser.

'When I come home,' she had said, 'I'll see them there first thing and I'll dance in them, won't I, Mother, won't I?' And in the child's voice there had been that little catch of fear again and she had suddenly come behind her chair and put her arms round her and laid her cheek against her hair. She could still feel those cold little tears that had fallen on to the back of her neck and rolled down behind her collar . . .

. . . People seemed to be always finding her in their way, and suddenly the busman, with an unpleasant smile, put his face close to hers and said cynically :

'Strap 'anging a 'obby of yours, ma'am?' And when she looked around her there were crowds of empty little velvet seats. She sat down hurriedly in one of them, but again in an instant the busman was at her, more suggestively sarcastic than before : 'You got out two places back, didn't you?' 'Yde Park Corner, if I remember right. Twopence, please.' And struggling nervously with the clasp of her shabby black purse, she gave him two more of her precious pennies and escaped from the bus.

Outside there was no park to be seen anywhere at all. She must have gone long past it. The streets here were bigger and wider, grand-looking streets ; she felt she should almost apologise to someone for being in them at all. But quite suddenly, right in front of her, was a golden glorious shower of cowslips piled upon a barrow, faintly fragrant and sweet.

She stood in front of them and drew in a timid breath of their sweetness. She put out her hand and touched them, lightly—— Oh ! sweet, oh lovely. But from behind the flowers a girl appeared, with cold threatening eyes.

‘Now then,’ she said sharply, ‘sixpence a bunch and ’ands off the blooms, if you please.’

She moved hastily away. Oh, for gentleness, for a little kindness; couldn’t one’s heart get a little comfort anywhere?

What had the nurse in hospital said she had just given Ellenora?—‘something to strengthen the heart,’—but the heart of little Ellenora had been too tired—needed no strength now. It was she who needed it; that was just what she needed now, ‘something to strengthen the heart.’ The cowslips might have done it; if one held a soft moist bunch close, close, it might bring kind sweet things near, gentle shady places where one could go quietly away and hide, hide from eyes that were cruel, that accused. One meant no harm, no harm at all.

. . . That girl that had come to the cottage door, what had she been collecting for again? S.P.C.A. Yes, that was it. Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Why wasn’t there one for prevention of cruelty to humans, prevention of cruelty to hearts? How they hunted one, wounded one, these cruel, cruel humans; struck one down while one stood on the very brink of despair.

She must go home—she would go home, if it were not for those little waiting slippers, she would go home at once. But just now she was so tired—so tired—she must find somewhere to sit down, if only for a minute or two; and as she looked up she saw that there was a great grey church in front of her. Its door was a little open. It seemed as if it were with her last ounce of strength that she climbed the four stone steps leading up to it and went in.

The heavy door swung softly to behind her, shutting out the noise of the street; in here there was so much space, it was so dim, so quiet, no one would notice, would look

at one here at all. There was a great stone pillar in a little dark side chapel, and a chair behind it that she crept on to, and there she sat, at first quite still, hearing nothing and feeling nothing, only relief at just being able to sit there—still. In a little while, though, she began to hear voices singing from far away at the front of the church, where the light fell softly from the warm stained-glass windows, and saw that a few shadowy people were gathered near the distant altar; then one voice, a clear low voice that rose alone in the immense silence, and words that fell slowly, gravely, across, it seemed, all time towards her, from very far away, from very long ago. They fell on her mind with only a vague half comprehension, rested there, were laid away as it were for future use—time enough—‘not forsaken’—‘courage’—‘strength’—ah, what was this, ‘with strength, with strength in your soul,’ not just your heart—your soul, that was it, that was it! She looked quickly up, and from a painting hanging on the wall there looked down on her, eyes, full of a great, a deep compassion. She had forgotten such tenderness could be; here at last under those gentle eyes one could cry, cry at last . . ., but first she wanted to pray. She slipped off the chair on to her knees and laid her head on her arms; there were no eyes but those loving ones to see her now, yet no words came, not for a long time; then at last:

*‘Jesus, tender shepherd, hear me,
Bless Thy little lamb to-night;
Through the darkness be Thou near me,
Keep me safe till morning light . . .’*

It was Ellenora’s prayer, every evening as a little child she had said it, pressing her small bent head against her breast . . . ‘safe till morning light . . .’

By and by she would go home and put the little slippers

away, with strength, with strength in her soul, but first she would rest here and have a cry, leaning one's tired head up against the great grey pillar—one could cry at last, one could cry one's poor broken heart out. And the music rolled and swelled, grave and lovely ; it seemed as if it bore one's sorrow with it, rose with one's grief and laid it, changed somehow, beautiful, a flower, at the little feet of Ellenora, at the feet of God.

MALARIA.

*I lie and quake, while peal on peal of thunder,
Stifled and dim, from out the forest rolls :
Murmurs like these have tortured countless souls,
And stricken hearts innumerable with wonder !*

*It is as though the Dark were torn asunder
By winds of sorrow, while a deep bell tolls
The Young to tears ; but blesses and consoles
The Aged with dreams to cancel every blunder !*

*Surges that break on some unmemoried shore ;
Tread of vast armies ; tireless hurricanes ;
Dances delirious ; groans of giant cranes ;
Dead hands that beat a never-opened door ;
Bugles that peal . . . all these, no less, no more
Than blood athrob in fever-tortured veins !*

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Nigeria.

STUDENT DAYS IN GERMANY BEFORE THE WAR.

BY ROSE FYLEMAN.

A FEW years before the Great War I was in Berlin, studying singing. I made friends with two young Canadian girls who had come over in charge of a chaperone—a young widowed artist—for a year's work. One of them was studying German, the other the violin.

English 'Misses' were in great favour in Germany in those days, and we all had lots of admirers and attention. As one of the two girls—now the happy mother of a flourishing family of eight, out in Winnipeg—remarked to me on a recent visit to London, 'It was almost a miracle that none of us married a German!'

But in a general way we didn't like the attitude towards women of most of the men we met, particularly not that of the man in the street (literally).

Being young and light-hearted, we thought it not amusing to have constant flattering remarks flung at us by passers-by—'Mouse-feet,' 'Charming child,' and so on. But it was less amusing to sit in a tram-car and be steadily stared at by the young man opposite from the beginning to the end of the journey.

I am still proud to remember the successful defence that I used to put up against this particular annoyance.

It consisted in turning on a slight, but sufficiently noticeable squint, which I was able to maintain without effort for quite a time.

The only drawback was a resulting slight distortion of

vision which made it a little difficult for me to see exactly how disconcerting was the effect produced on my vis-à-vis. But I could see enough to know that the plan worked.

It was even more unpleasant to be followed at night, especially as the street doors of the big apartment houses were locked at a certain hour—eleven, I think it was—and one had to let oneself in with a gigantic key. There was no electric light in the houses where the cheaper pensions were situated, and it was before the day of electric torches, so that it meant crossing a dark entrance hall and literally feeling one's way up a long staircase. If by any chance you were coming home unaccompanied you risked the horrid possibility of some stranger trying to get in with you. This once happened to me, and I was so frightened that I never again came home late by myself during the two years I spent in Berlin.

Even in the houses where I visited I found it difficult to fall in with the accepted attitude towards the male members of the family. They were always waited upon, had the best of everything, and were served first at table. I once demurred at being expected to go down the garden to take a cup of coffee to the eldest son of the house, who was lolling down there at his ease with a book. I don't think his mother ever forgave me.

Army officers were held in particularly high esteem. They certainly looked very smart in their grey capes, and kissed your hand and clicked their heels rather engagingly, but they walked along the pavement as though they were the kings of creation, and less exalted people had to make way for them. Officials of every kind were disagreeable. A police officer once came to our flat about a watch that had been stolen from one of us, and actually asked what we would pay him to get it back. He also became rather

unpleasantly affectionate when he found that we had no man with us. Fortunately one of us thought of ringing up a lawyer friend, who promptly offered to come round at once. The police officer, realising what was happening, became apologetic and made off hastily. We got the watch back.

There were very gay parties in Berlin in those days, especially the fancy-dress functions.

I remember a whole flat—a very large one—being arranged as an underseas kingdom, the invitations being issued as from King Neptune and Consort. We were received by the royal pair, seated on an elaborate throne; the ceilings were hung with green gauze to represent the sea above our heads and there were all manner of fantastic sea-shows. Another party was arranged as a country fair and was quite charming. There was usually a cotillion dance at those parties. A trolley would be wheeled in, laden with little bouquets, and these the men presented to their partners. You had only one turn round the room with each man; he then flung you hastily into a seat and rushed off for another bouquet to give to another girl. The more bouquets you got the more of a success you were, and certainly we English girls had no reason to complain on these occasions. It was great fun to walk home to your pension accompanied by a little bevy of cavaliers laden with flowers. I remember a frosty night when all the bouquets were frozen stiff in the icy air. They looked lovely; but the next morning they were all brown and dead.

Berlin at Christmas-time was wonderful. At many of the street-corners there were miniature forests of Christmas-trees standing upright on the pavement, and in the squares there were rows of small booths gay with toys and bright decorations. Elaborate and beautiful fairy-tale scenes were

exhibited in the windows of the big stores, and, best of all, on Christmas Eve every flat displayed a lighted Christmas-tree in one of its windows, the curtains being drawn aside so that one could see the trees from the street. The effect was enchanting. And inside the flats the Christmas-eve ceremony of the distribution of gifts was equally delightful. For every member of the household, and for every guest as well, there was a pile of lovely presents, while in addition to the more substantial gifts everybody had a 'gay plate' heaped high with good things—nuts, apples, crystallised fruits, marzipan, chocolates, almonds and raisins, and the delectable Nuremberg *Pfeffer-kuchen*, brown and spiced and amusingly patterned with sugar.

These celebrations went on in the Jewish houses where I visited as well as in the non-Jewish.

Alas and alas . . . I know a Jewish family in Hamburg where, when the recent anti-Semitic campaign started, the young housewife, feeling that her pride would not allow her to continue the Christmas celebrations, explained to her little boys that there would no longer be a Christmas-tree and a party. And one of them, yearning after those bright festivities, said to her—'Mutti, *must* we be Jews?' . . .

The three Canadians and I lived in various successive pensions and finally settled in modest rooms in the back part of a small block of flats.

Our landlady, Frau Kessel (Kettle), was a cross little old woman who looked rather like a witch in a fairy-tale. We three younger ones were all dark-haired, and when we were dressed up in our best to go out to a party, she would coldly inspect us and then remark—'German gentlemen admire blonde ladies,' a so-to-speak prophetic endorsement of a phrase that was later to become famous the world over.

I was studying singing under a very well-known teacher

of the day—Etelka Gerster. I was the only English girl among her pupils and continually had my coldness flung at me, also what was looked upon as a typically English defect—a lisp which could be detected, so it was said, in the choral singing. I was called by the Gerster, ‘The little English girl who wouldn’t cry.’ The others used to cry when she was in a rage and shouted and threw books, but I just wouldn’t. She was the most autocratic person I have ever met. When I ventured to say that practising gave me a sore throat, she replied, ‘That is impossible with my method,’ and that was that. My alleged stolidity was a great trial to her tempestuous nature. ‘Fall in love, *Engländerin*,’ she used to say; ‘for Heaven’s sake have an unhappy love affair. What about Wolff here? He’s married; he’ll do.’ Wolff (the accompanist) was an elderly, singularly unattractive person, and he didn’t do!

Frau Gerster knew all sorts of august personages, ‘Highnesses’ and what-not, and some of their daughters came for lessons. I remember them as invariably blonde and entirely unmusical, but possibly my memory exaggerates these peculiarities.

She never threw books at them, and when the august personages themselves came to see her we were all turned out of the great music-room, with its rows of little gilt chairs along the walls, into the entrance-hall, where we had to wait, sometimes for an hour or more, till the great folk came out.

Once a year, or perhaps once every two years, I’m not quite sure which, the women artists in Berlin gave a great fancy-dress ball and fête. No men were admitted; it was an entirely feminine function. It was a most gorgeous affair. Many of the women came dressed as men—toreadors, Arabs, harlequins and so on, and all the dresses were fantastic and

daring. There were exquisite tableaux, too, and the decorations, which were, of course, arranged by the artists themselves, were original and beautiful.

Frau Gerster always had tickets to give away, and would lend her pupils costumes from her own old operatic wardrobe.

We all had a very good time and enjoyed behaving as idiotically as we liked, and carrying on absurd pseudo-flirtations with extravagant pseudo-admirers. I don't think there were any abnormal implications attached to the function; if there were, I, for one, was entirely unaware of them. The exciting element consisted in the fact that a few men always contrived to get in in spite of the great care taken over distributing the tickets. Firemen had to be admitted because of the flimsiness of the scenery, and some of the firemen were undoubtedly bogus. But if a man who had managed to get in illegitimately was discovered, he was set upon by a crowd of the women and hounded from the building.

In the warm weather I would often be invited by families at whose houses I visited, to join on a Sunday in a country excursion. We would go a few miles out of town by train, lunch heartily at a beer-garden near the station, and spend the rest of the day strolling from one place of refreshment to another and writing 'view-postcards,' on all of which we all wrote our names, no matter to whom they were addressed. I don't suppose we ever walked more than two miles on those occasions.

Since then Germany, at any rate young Germany, has become much more exercise-minded, I know. I don't know whether they eat and drink less; possibly they have to. Certainly, food formerly played a very important part in the lives of middle-class families. One odd characteristic

of Berlin at that time was the fact that there was no generally accepted time for the mid-day meal. It was said that by a little careful planning you could make a tour of your friends' houses between eleven-thirty and six any day, and always find a meal going on. People were very hospitable ; there was a tradition that students were generally poor and under-fed. I have never eaten such meals as the Sunday dinners to which I was invited in Berlin.

There were always plenty of opportunities of hearing good music. The Sunday morning rehearsals of the celebrated *Philharmonie* concerts were famous, and we were given tickets for innumerable small recitals. You could hear splendidly from the gallery in the Opera House, and the pensions all provided picnic suppers for those who wished to go. The music-students used to sit on the gallery stairs between the acts, with their packets of sandwiches on their knees, and beside them a glass of beer from the unpretentious gallery buffet.

Those were two very happy years that I spent in Berlin. I had no end of fun, and my whole allowance, apart from my lessons, was only six pounds a month !

I went back to Germany many times. It has always been to me a country of beauty and romance, with its fairy-tale pinewoods and castles of enchantment, its toy-box villages, its friendly peasants, its stately rivers and fair cities. I do not think I shall ever see them again.

THE PEACEFUL ORCHARD.

*There is a subtle anodyne for care,
Anxiety, and heaviness of heart
Within this quiet acre of my own,
Where farm and Forest meet in harmony
And, as a sheep-trimmed orchard, coalesce—
In part the same as each, yet still itself,
And, varied by the Seasons' kindly grace,
An airy cloister 'neath the apple-trees,
A place for contemplation wholly fair.*

*But not for every man such peace as this—
To some 'twere boredom and monotony.
Hot Youth, untutored by the handling World,
Would let the fragile fabric of this calm
Slip from his thoughtless grasp, and fall to earth
To crash like crystal dropped by slattern hands.
And he, who easy treads upon Life's path,
Nought knowing of the fear of poverty,—
Who has not looked stark Death between the eyes,
Or known the loss of loved ones, and the void
Their long mourned absence leaves within the heart,—
He, who has only known the smiling face
Of Fortune, and has never seen her frown,
Could find this simple peace too samely plain,
And long, incontinent, for city streets,
Bright searing lights, and futile gaieties.*

*Such men shall not inherit this fair Earth,
For they but lose—in very earthliness—
Appreciation's heavenly gift, that makes
All gifts of Earth reflect the light of Heaven.*

*But I, within this haven of content
Encompassed by a hedge of hazel wands,
Beech, dog-rose, hawthorn, twined with bryony,
Through which the eyes, by gentle slopes beguiled,
In contrast to the Forest's tracery,
Gaze far beyond the river and the vale,
O'er chequered tillage, wooded scarp, and lea
To where, as tho' beyond the utmost rim
Of this my little world, vague mountain shapes
Loom purple, blue, or ever changing grey,—
And, to the East, by mighty trees enfenced,
Whose trunks, in olden times, were set apart
To build the oaken walls that held the Seas
For England:—I, within this kind domain,
This lot, that falls to me in fairest ground,
This fruitful field, this goodly heritage,
Forget the World's temptations and its strain.*

*Enough for me the sunshine and the birds,—
And who shall watch a bird in flight without
A sense of thankfulness that he has known
Such grace, such beauty, and such artifice?—
The changing skies, the moonlit mysteries,
The springing blade and budding twig that make
The morning of the Year, before the flowers
And blossoms of High Summer's loveliness
Lead on unto the time of Harvest-home
And fullness of the kindly fruits of Earth.
And then—the quietude of Winter's sleep.*

*Let me not speak as pontiff or as prig—
 For, in the beauty of this orchard's peace,
 Surely a man may learn humility.
 It shall suffice if I may humbly tell
 How that each passing day is filled with calm,
 Giving me time to turn my latest thoughts
 To things more lovely than the World's affairs,—
 To plan the sure declension of my years
 So that I may, when, at the end, my soul
 Shall pass to regions of untold content,
 But leave the World unharmed that I have lived,
 And—if God wills it—by my words more fair.*

FRANCKLYN HELMORE.

ROOKS.

*The rooks are out of their trees,
 The black rooks are calling :
 ' War ! War ! War !'
 In confusion and anger,
 Unconscious of their own sorcery,
 Circling, they draw on the sky
 The ciphers of Fear.*

*In murky squadrons
 They darken the heaven,
 Fast as alarm they fly—
 Obedient to what order
 From what Commander ?
 By what volition,
 Reluctant driven ?*

*Black rooks,
Distractedly flying,
Scream in malevolence :
‘ War ! War ! War ! ’
When night is near,
Wheel back to shelters
In fouled high places,
Crowded in conference,
There to croak and whimper.
Rending among them,
Like a piece of stripped flesh,
The red word, ‘ War ! ’*

* * *

*O Hesper, Holy Star !
Afloat on western clouds,
As on a pensive sea.
Light up our darkening earth
With your divinity.*

HELEN GRANVILLE-BARKER.

Paris.

GHERGILDA OF SCANNO.

BY HELEN HESTER COLVILL.

I.

THE effect of big hotels is to make all places alike, and I am told there is now one at Scanno. When the Englishwoman with the paint-box was there in the pre-war days, Scanno was not at all like other places. It was medieval ; a mountain hamlet at the back of beyond, connected with the great world and modern times only by the postman, who daily made the twelve-mile journey to Anversa in a crazy chaise.

At Scanno (said to have been originally a Greek colony) the girls are so much alike you might think them all sisters. They all look about sixteen, they have straight, delicately chiselled oval faces, light brown hair and soft golden-brown eyes. They wear a medieval dress with long dark skirts heavily pleated, leg of mutton sleeves, and silver buttons. They do their hair once a week, plaiting it in long tails, intermixed with strands of scarlet or emerald wool. The tails are wound round the head and crowned with a dark turban called *Fasciatoja*, high and square over the brow, lifted at the sides to show the frills of a white cap. Girls or women, they despise chairs and squat, oriental fashion, on the ground, their knees up to their chins. And, girls or women, they do all the hard work of the place. True, there are men in Scanno, and quite a number of clever little boys who finish their schooling at ten. The boys sit on stone fences and ask each other arithmetical conundrums. The men play *mora* and watch their sheep grazing on the

fine mountain-encircled pasture lands which have made Scanno famous throughout the Abruzzi.

Of course it may all be entirely different since the arrival of the big hotel. I speak of how the Englishwoman found it twenty years ago. She had come from Pettorano, also of the Abruzzi, where the girls with snowy headgear, flitting about the sunny streets suggested white winged angels ; in Scanno, especially about nightfall of a rainy day, when she was stumbling down the steep and slippery Via Abrami to Signor Vincenzo's Inn, she fancied she had dropped into some strange Limbo, where the dark figures, with the celestial faces glimmering under the monstrous headdresses, must be those of lost angels from some ruined Paradise.

For a lively walk Signor Vincenzo took his guest to the little Campo Santo under Saint Egidio's Chapel, high up on the steep mountain. There he told her the story of Ghergilda ; Ghergilda who among the lovely maidens of Scanno had been the loveliest, Ghergilda, whose innocent life had been sacrificed, not for a friend but for one——

II.

*'Era zu mese che zu ciuccio raglia,
Quanno a le prate cantano zu grilli,
E zu cuculu canta pa la Plaglia
Faccia fronte alla casa di Pantilli ;
Quanno zi faghi mettino la foglia,
E covano a zi'nidi zi cardilli ;—
Allora sposar Marietta e Nanno,
La miglia juventu che stenga a Scanno.'*

*'May is the month of the sun-gold spring
When in the meadows the grasshoppers sing,
When the cuckoo shouts from the mountain moor
Over against Signor Pantilli's door ;*

*When the leaves burst forth in the beech-tree
And on their nests the bright goldfinches brood
Then, then they were wed, Marietta and Nanno,
The fairest and best of the children of Scanno.*

So sang young Egidio serenading his *affidata* (t
‘They must have been just like us,’ he sai
no ! Marietta I am sure was less lovely than
Ghergilda !’

‘And Nanno wasn’t Egidio,’ she murmured, fee
rain of his kisses on her ear, and her pillar-like th
bare by the medieval cut of her heavy raiment.

‘A year is an eternity to wait,’ sighed Egidio
coraggio ! By May I shall have bought sheep and
rich ; and we will live in the white house, from the
of which you can see the chapel of my patron saint. And
every Sunday, my Ghergilda, we will walk up there together,
and pray the saint to give us many babes, all of them beautiful
and strong, and as good as you, *mia bella* ! And see ! here
is the *cinquina* all ready ! You may *look* but you mustn’t
have it till the last time I see you before the wedding feast.
After that it is yours.”

And he exhibited the gold coin marked with a cross, a
most sacred token, which Ghergilda touched with deepest
reverence for a moment only.

‘On that day,’ continued the ‘*sposo*’ excitedly, ‘we shall
both wear our best clothing, and all our relations will come,
and each one will give us coins, also with crosses, but not
of gold like the *cinquina*. The feast must be in May, and
till then we may see each other daily. But it’s very stupid
that we can be only *affidati* for a whole year, when we
already have money enough.’

‘It’s the custom. We must do what is right,’ said the

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Of cour:

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fitting adwinner. Egidio had belonged to the learned
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when shve his bride. His parents were (for Scanno) in
Abramible circumstances ; and this was lucky because his
droppedbeing lame, could not work like other women, and
with th was a gentle, thriftless, open-handed person, who
headdressy to anyone asking for it, and believed it grew in
Paradis et by course of nature. Filial piety is strong in

For, and Egidio loved father and mother as the very
apples of his eye. With help of the facile and kind-hearted
Syndic he had been exempted from the usual military service,
on the plea that his mother was invalided and he was the
only son. The exemption was something of a disappoint-
ment to himself, but at this stage of his life Egidio saw every-
thing through his parents' spectacles and never dreamed of
questioning their authority or their wisdom.

The boy had known Ghergilda all her life, but not till
he was eighteen had it occurred to him that she was different
from the other girls—a wonder ! a glory ! a queen ! a
star !

‘ Get me this woman or I die ! ’ he cried to his father ;
and of course the father in his turn never dreamed of opposing
the one fine son who was the very apple of *his* eye. So the
customary negotiations took place, the customary gifts were
given and received, and the ‘ *affidata* ’ wore the betrothal
ring. The stepmother crossly impoverished herself to
provide the correct betrothal feast, and Orazio, Egidio’s

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'*sposa*,' with a little sigh which robbed her speech of its primness.

Ghergilda was stepdaughter of the struggling widow who kept the one little shop in the Via Santurri. She had seven sturdy boys and girls of her own, and Ghergilda was the family breadwinner. Egidio had belonged to the learned little boys who understood arithmetic. In position he was a cut above his bride. His parents were (for Scanno) in comfortable circumstances; and this was lucky because his mother, being lame, could not work like other women, and his father was a gentle, thriftless, open-handed person, who gave money to anyone asking for it, and believed it grew in his pocket by course of nature. Filial piety is strong in Scanno, and Egidio loved father and mother as the very apples of his eye. With help of the facile and kind-hearted Syndic he had been exempted from the usual military service, on the plea that his mother was invalided and he was the only son. The exemption was something of a disappointment to himself, but at this stage of his life Egidio saw everything through his parents' spectacles and never dreamed of questioning their authority or their wisdom.

The boy had known Ghergilda all her life, but not till he was eighteen had it occurred to him that she was different from the other girls—a wonder! a glory! a queen! a star!

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father, looked forward to the wedding supper next May with a childish delight in so fine an opportunity for expenditure.

III.

Alas ! much can happen in a year, even at Scanno.

Orazio's fine sheep were suddenly attacked by an infectious disease ; the neighbours took fright ; municipal authorities, who seldom did anything but now and then did too much, swooped down like vultures and ordered his whole rich flocks to be slaughtered. He had been spending, giving, borrowing recklessly in anticipation of his boy's wedding ; this calamity to the sheep spelt ruin. Ghergilda's step-mother was greatly displeased, and the relations on both sides informed the '*affidati*' that the wedding gifts of coins, many and fat, were unlikely to be forthcoming.

Ghergilda knelt at her lover's knee, raised her face to his and swore she would marry him with no coin at all in their treasury but the one *cinquina*. She would work for him ! Oh yes ! she would labour day and night harder than ever she had laboured for the seven little boys and girls. She would beg for him in the streets ! The one only thing she would not do was to give him up. Never ! never ! By the Holy House of Loreto ! by Sant' Egidio, their patron saint !

He kissed her, murmuring words of undying love, and Ghergilda was happy ; but Egidio, alas ! was not. More thoughtful than most of his fellows he realised what a very poor prospect he was offering to his bride. Nor was he thinking only of his bride, beloved as she was. He was tortured by visions of his dear crippled mother and his dear gentle foolish father, turned out of their home, living on the charity and the derision of their neighbours.

A week later Egidio, with bursting sobs, confessed to Ghergilda, that their wedding would have to wait. He was going, yes, *going*—to America, that El Dorado of which every boy in the Abruzzi dreams. The postman's uncle had promised an introduction to a brother-in-law, head of a Candy factory in Chicago. The Syndic had offered a donation towards the passage money. Egidio had promised to serve for two years at the Candy factory. He would get rich, he would come home in a later May and be married. He would buy lots and lots of sheep. Perhaps even he would drive the post-chaise to Anversa ! Had not the present postman begun by three years in New York ? Egidio would speak the American language very quickly. And sums ! He had always been good at sums. In American factories—so said the postman—sums were always required, and the young men who could do them were called *clerks* and wore black coats ! Yes, that was it ! He would come home in a black coat, wealthy ; and they would be married. Only not this first oncoming May. *Now* he must go.

'Take me with you, Egidio of my heart,' said Ghergilda, her hands clasped round his arm.

'Ah no, my beloved ! Lovely angel that you are, among the wicked men of that savage country evil might befall you. And the *bambini* we have prayed our saint to give us would be awkward in Chicago. It is best I go alone, my Gilda. For two years. *Cara mia bella, bella, cara mia !*'

'But will they *let* you come away in two years ?' she questioned, thinking Egidio was selling himself into slavery.

'They will have to. Think you I would abandon my old parents for more than two years ?'

'Or me ?' said Ghergilda, forcing her dimpling smile.

'Or thee, my Gilda ! Oh my dove, promise me you

will visit my aged mother while I am away, and be a daughter to her who has no daughter of her own.'

'I promise,' said Ghergilda.

Egidio went. And all Scanno walked the twelve miles to Anversa to see him off. All Scanno wept. He wept. His parents wept. Ghergilda wept—violently.

Yet after a week or two hope revived in her breast, and again she looked mere sixteen. The young men who had been cut out by the erstwhile prosperous Egidio, began to wonder if now there might not be a chance for one of them.

They did not know Ghergilda.

IV.

Egidio wrote almost immediately on landing, a letter beautifully penned and expressed, not easy for the illiterate recipient to read. He wrote again from Chicago. He had work in the counting house department of the Candy factory. His wages were high. The master was a good Italian, but his wife and daughter were foreigners. The workmen and all the other clerks were stupid. Once he (Egidio) could talk their language he would be boss over them all. Boss was a word of the pure English, and meant a kind of king. Yes! that was what he intended to be—king over a strange people in a strange land. And in May of the second—no, the third year—he would come home and be married.

Ghergilda spent hours deciphering this letter. It seemed encouraging and she went about singing,

*'Then, then, they were wed, Marietta and Nanno,
Fairest and best of the children of Scanno.'*

She bought writing paper and stamp, and paid the public letter-writer to compose for her an epistle to her lover.

She could not afford more than one sentence ; but it told of her great love and endless faith, and her hope of reunion when he had become a great man and a boss.

.

Slowly the two years went on. Egidio's letters grew shorter and further between. He was so busy. In this horrible country no one had time to sit down and rest. One wore too many clothes, and was burdened by vain cleanliness and laborious high-flown habits. Daily he yearned for his dear dirty Scanno, the green pastures with the sheep ; and his dear idolising mother to whom monthly he sent vast sums of money. And of course he longed also for his own lovely Ghergilda and sent presents of money likewise to her, but irregularly. She was not in need like his crippled mother. She was strong—able to work, as (at Scanno) it is right for women to work.

Work she did. She carried water in a huge copper vase on her head ; she collected fire-wood, piled it on the donkey and led him home, supporting him with her arms lest he should fall in the precipitous miry streets. She played with the stepchildren, knitted, sewed, spun and wove for them. She fed the pig, washed the clothes, assisted at the dye works, baked cakes for the little shop. Every day she visited Egidio's mother, did her chars and ran her errands. The days, the weeks, the months rolled on.

There came a day when Ghergilda, having waited three fortnights for a letter, found that in the interim his mother had received two. The girl was angry and did no charing. The lame woman felt that should this mismanagement occur again Ghergilda must not know. It did occur again ; but the wily mother joined in surprise at her son's silence ; and, with his '*affidata*,' hoped he was not ill.

When the second May had come and two years were

over, Egidio reported that he was now head clerk at a great salary, and had come into another piece of luck as well which would enable him to buy back all his father's earlier affluence. In gratitude for this good fortune he had promised to remain at the Candy factory for two years more. Ghergilda stifled her tears and sat with the old couple sympathising in Orazio's simple rejoicings, and wondering with the lame woman what could be the good luck which had befallen the exile. The lame woman knew, and had been told to break the news to the '*affidata*' ; but Ghergilda's charing was valuable, and the cripple held her peace.

The girl was still the beauty of Scanno ; but her stepmother told her she was idle, and eating the bread of her brothers and sisters, and she ought to marry the swineherd instead of crying for the fool who had run away from her. To keep the stepmother quiet Ghergilda joined her friend Pepina, who was doing building work for Signor Vincenzo. Pepina also was a handsome creature, and the two girls, tall and proud, strong and straight, with sun-kissed cheeks and shining eyes, brought glory to the new little house which was being added to the Inn. They kilted up their voluminous skirts, mixed mortar, ran up ladders, carried whitewash on the tops of their turbans. Masons and bricklayers used to stop work to admire them, as the Greeks probably admired and were jealous of the Amazons. Signor Vincenzo was eloquent in describing the girls and their superhuman beauty, especially Ghergilda's. Now and then foreign visitors used to stray into Scanno, and Signor Vincenzo, taking them round the village sights, never omitted to point out the beauty, the angel beauty of—Ghergilda, '*fairest and best of the children of Scanno.*'

But the stepmother grew more peevish than ever. If Ghergilda—great lazy thing—was not good enough for the

swineherd let her marry the tipsy bricklayer ; and anyhow take herself out of the cake shop and make room for her developing half-sisters !

It was about this time that Egidio's father suddenly died of a stroke ; and his widow wrote to her son in Chicago that she needed him, and he must come back home.

V.

One day Ghergilda at her rough work, saw the post-chaise arriving with the mails, and bringing strangers—travellers with trunks, foreign trunks. The travellers were three, a gentleman in good broadcloth, a lady with a fur boa, and a baby. The baby was sickly with wizened face and staring eyes. The gentleman was—Egidio. He turned to look at the new house, and his eyes fell full on Ghergilda. Not so soon had he expected to see her, and he crimsoned to the roots of his hair. But he had no presence of mind and attempted no salutation. Perhaps it was wiser so.

She dusted her turban, let her skirt down, dipped her fingers in water, and followed the chaise to the Inn where the horse pulled up. She told herself that the woman with the fur boa was some English tourist whom Egidio was escorting. No. Carrying the child, dragging the lady who was protesting that she could not and would not walk down the muddy staircase which he called a street, Egidio conducted the stranger to his mother's house, through the vaulted doorway, down the thirteen steps, into the dire blackness beyond.

'But, my dear, it's a den !' cried the lady in broken Italian ; "a filthy loathsome den ! I will not go in—I would rather die ! It's beastly ! I will not go in !'

So much Ghergilda heard before the door was slammed to with a long hollow groan. She went back to her work.

‘What’s the matter?’ asked Pepina; ‘have you hurt yourself? Why do you cry?’

Ghergilda made no answer. She was twenty and so far had looked sixteen. Five minutes had turned her into an old woman.

Egidio had married in Chicago—his master’s daughter. She had a dowry, and he was given partnership in the business if he chose to stay.

‘*Mámma mia*,’ he had written in his letter home, ‘for God’s sake explain to Ghergilda how it is! May Heaven forgive me!’

Almost he had decided to remain permanently in Chicago, when the news of his father’s death upset him. Love of his birthplace flamed up in him, and love of his parents if not love of Ghergilda. Exile had become intolerable. To his wife’s consternation he announced immediate departure, carrying his money-bags and his son.

‘The child can’t go without me,’ said the wife, though in her heart she thought the infant a bore.

Egidio in his impatience did not contest this point. Let her come if she wished it. He was going home!

Arrived, the burden of years and of the strange land rolled off him. He was a boy again and in his mother’s arms.

But the wife said, ‘It’s a filthy den!’ and she cleaned the chair she was offered before sitting upon it, and made insulting comments to the old peasant woman—withered and hobbling, hideously clothed and smelling of garlic—who with sobs had fallen on Egidio’s neck, apparently to his solace.

His solace, yes! for he was at home; a boy again, at home and in his mother’s arms.

But at night he could not sleep—he was haunted by visions of Ghergilda.

VI.

The couple did not stay long at Scanno ; the conditions were impossible. Damp and insanitation were fatal for the little boy with the staring eyes. Before the new moon he sickened, died, and was buried in the Campo Santo of Sant' Egidio. It was not the sort of baby the father had expected or desired, but he wept, and the mother's manifest indifference jarred upon him terribly. Almost at once she began asking him to take her to Naples, where she could buy a proper (and expensive) mourning frock to replace the dismal travelling rag she was making shift with. Naples ! The very name conjured up visions of fashionable hairdressers and smart shops. Moreover someone on the liner had told her of romantic musicians at Naples, who nightly sang *Funicoli* from play-boats tossing gently on the moonlit waves of a sea far bluer than the Atlantic. How charming ! How *amusing* !

But—whatever was this horde of horrible people who were flocking into the house—if house it could be called—and saying they had come to cross themselves beside the corpse?—the little corpse laid out in its coffin on view ('on view !'), smothered in artificial flowers and leaflets printed with Latin prayers.

'It's the custom,' explained Egidio ; 'it's to rest his soul and lift him out of Purgatory.'

'Stuff and nonsense,' said the mother.

'It's not stuff and nonsense. It's prayers. It's always done. I won't have it neglected.'

'Stuff and nonsense. There's no Purgatory and I don't care if there is. He was my child and that's enough.'

'But he was my child, too. When he meets me in Heaven, he shan't say I forgot anything due to him.'

‘ Stuff and nonsense. Just look at that great girl who has come in and is actually *touching* the child ! How horrid ! I suppose she’s thinking we’d bury him alive if she didn’t interfere ! What business is it of hers anyway ? ’

‘ Go away, woman, and leave me my dead to myself,’ said Egidio.

When Ghergilda, according to Scanno custom, visited the little corpse, and very softly touched the tiny shrivelled and darkened head, she remembered how Egidio and she had prayed together for the *bambini* ; *bambini* many, strong like herself, and beautiful as Egidio had been—before he went to Chicago. She said little ; meekly she took up her bleeding heart, her cross, and had no hard thoughts. Claspings her hand feverishly he attempted some futile explanations, but she shook her head and refused to hear. Once indeed she allowed him to kiss her, a good-bye relinquishing kiss, coals of fire on the lips of each. Then she went back to her work at the building, refusing his offer of an income for her step-mother and herself.

The young men of Scanno stared at the *Americana* and said rude things to her. Nor did they resume friendship with Egidio, who had been false to Ghergilda.

‘ All right ! All right, woman. We’ll go to Naples. And I pray the holy devil there to bite off your tongue and stop these eternal upbraidings. Are you never going to believe that *I like* this place ? ’

The *Americana* shrugged her thin shoulders.

‘ Have you ever liked anything I like—except my dollars ? ’ she said tartly, if not entirely unreasonably.

VII.

Egidio did not want *Funicoli*, nor shops, nor even an azure sea. His affections were faithful to the rolling, park-like, pasture lands, encircled by barren mountains and entered only by one dark and narrow, winding and mysterious gorge. A cutting, the gorge seemed, through the rocks ; of a surety it had been men's work ; hewn out by giants in the spacious days before history began. How had the giants done it ? Why ? Who were they ? What had become of them ? As everyone knew the spirits of these Unknown still haunted the gorge. They had been turned into hobgoblins. A few persons had seen the hobgoblins. Many had heard them flapping invisible wings, making unearthly screams when they quarrelled over their feasts of carrion—carrion that two days earlier had been one of Orazio's liveliest and best-prized lambs ! It was sacrilegious, idolatrous, *wicked*, to invade the gorge after sunset. Only audacious boys—Egidio their ringleader—had dreamed of attempting such criminal action, punishable as it was by paralysis, even by madness. To the most sceptical it was obvious that the disaster to Orazio's flocks had been occasioned by the presumption of his twelve-year-old son. For Egidio boasted of having twice, positively *twice*—explored the gorge, end to end, after midnight ; and had seen no goblins, nor giants, nor antediluvians ; only three or four of the unseemly birds with wide pinions and bare necks, which lived and nested, unchecked and unstudied, free denizens of the gloomy solitude, and no doubt personating the hobgoblins.

By daylight, what could be more delightful than to make exit from the gorge into the fair green pastures ? To the sheep probably, and certainly to Egidio, this pasture land

seemed the authentic Earthly Paradise. Here all was security and peace, no storms, no enemies ; no need of fold, no need of guardians ; fodder rich and abundant, warmth, shelter, safety. In certain circumstances hobgoblins, inimical to thieves, make excellent shepherds ! The son's memory saw the green pastures still dotted with his father's sheep ; in imagination he saw them also in years to come dotted with his own sheep. What better tribute could he pay to the poor fond and foolish father whom he had loved, than to follow in that father's footsteps ?

Alas ! Egidio himself was not a little fond and foolish. Perhaps it was punishment for his boyish intrusion on the hobgoblins of the gorge !

VIII.

London, so say the geography books, is built on the Thames, Rome on the Tiber ; and Scanno is built on the Sagittorio. It is a fussy little river apt to run dry in summer, but at other seasons easily seduced into a condition of unpleasant flood. It rises in the more distant of the two mountain ranges which enclose the Paradise pastures. It hurries through the gorge, issues at right angles to the Anversa road which it crosses under a good stone bridge. All wheeled things and donkey riders or pack-saddle mules, follow this road ; but walkers found it tedious, and long ago had invented a short cut reducing their journey by at least a mile. The short cut, like the Anversa road, has to get over the Sagittorio. The first contrivance was by slippery stepping stones. Later a narrow foot-bridge with a single hand-rail was fixed up. This was now showing signs of wear, but no one worried so long as the weather was fine and the river did not rise unreasonably high.

Three days before the couple from Chicago were to

start for Naples, the American lady, bored to extinction, strolled out to witness the one great event of the Scanno day—the arrival of the post-chaise bringing the mails. As if to spite her, on this particular afternoon there were no letters, no parcels, no passengers, and the chaise drove away almost at once. The lady felt personally slighted. She also went away, stepping disdainfully like a displeased cat, and not noticing where she was going. The morning had been thundery and wet, but now a fitful sun had come out, and as always she felt an extreme unwillingness to re-enter the plebeian homestead of her uncivilised mother-in-law. She wandered on, instinctively following the short cut which led to the foot-bridge and then to the less pretentious part of the town. Fortunately and more by luck than judgment she was on the right side of the river and nearly at her destination, but so great was her distaste for return that she was ready to catch at any straw which could detain her. Joy ! There was an unexpected object on the far side of the stream ! an agreeable surprise ! actually a large, full-blown though out-of-season, scarlet anemone ! the very thing to enliven the rusty black frock which she was wearing in honour of the dead baby ! She was a woman to whom whims were laws ; at once and heedlessly she crossed the bridge and made her pointed four-inch shoe-heels carry her to the water's edge. Grumbling at a few drops of rain she began tearing up the brilliant plant. It was deeply rooted and much less accessible than she had expected. Though she dug furiously with her sunshade—not for her a sensible umbrella—she only made holes which at once filled up with water. She dragged at the innocent flower till its head came off. She stamped on it angrily, and it turned into just mud like the bank which had been its cradle.

By this time it was raining heavily ; she was getting

soaked and ought to be going home. Home ! What a travesty of a word ! Well ! anyhow she had not far to go. Horrible as was the mother-in-law's abominable den of a house, it was in the more decent part of the crowded little town—near the Inn, the Convent, and the one small shop. She just had to recross the foolish little bridge, climb some twenty steps up the dirty staircase of a street, and—at least she would be under cover ! Her flimsy frock was of course ruined. No matter, she had money in her purse and was going to the grand Naples shops ! She climbed up the bank to get to the bridge.

'*Signora !*' called a voice. '*Signora ! Non andar di la. Prender la gran via. Prender il monte. Andar m'monte !*'

She looked up. Yes, the great coarse girl who did men's work, who had touched the dead baby's head, who was her pet aversion. The creature was making signs, shouting, and hurrying towards the footbridge. Her skirt was hitched up showing her strong legs ; her fine arms, her pillar-like throat were bare, and she was splashed all over with paint.

'What a disgusting object !' thought the *Americana*, making no attempt to interpret the country speech nor to understand the signs. Under no circumstances would she have thought of doing anything recommended by that creature !

The American was naturally stupid. It had not occurred to her that the heavy shower was anything but a nuisance, that the Sagittorio was noisier than usual and was spitting foam hither and thither, that the water was almost on a level with the plank bridge, that the girl, Pepina, going ten minutes ago to her home in the slums, had picked her way perilously by the stepping stones instead of as usual easily by the bridge. Pepina was now out of sight and Ghergilda,

following her, was still far behind. She and the American had the world to themselves.

IX.

Madonna Egidio as they called her was overcome by panic, not connected with the water. It was her belief that all the inhabitants of Scanno were thieves, and she remembered that she was wearing her diamond ring and had her purse in her bag. The horrible girl was still shouting and still advancing.

‘ Signora ! Signora ! Attenzione ! Andar m’ monte ! Prender la gran via ! Il gran ponte ! ’

‘ She is going to rob me ! ’ said the American. ‘ What on earth am I to do ? Oh God ! She’s coming ! She’s going to murder me ! ’

To stand where she was on the wrong side of the bridge, on the very highroad to the slums would be fatal. Her only chance was to rush past the assailant before she had got to the bridge ; the lady would have gone in any wrong, any impossible, direction to save herself ! surely Egidio had once suggested that the slum quarter and the slum population were dangerous ?

Trembling in every limb, she jumped on the rotten planks of the saturated bridge. Her pointed heel made a hole in the planks. Her shoe stuck in the hole and came off. Her stockinged foot caught in the now exaggerated hole. The stocking tore. It seemed to her that her foot was jammed, paralysed, refusing to move. She screamed ; she staggered, she plunged ; she wrenched her foot out of the hole, she fell on her knees ; fountains of icy water shot up round her on every side. She reached for the hand-rail, it broke in her grasp. Her screams were horrible, and without intermission. Though it was not midnight

she remembered the tales of the hobgoblins ; she slipped, she fell, she rolled into the water.

Ghergilda had however come up ; breathless. She flung herself on the stepping stones, now submerged and a treacherous foothold even for one who knew every item of their possibilities. She clutched at the lady's skirt and gave one mighty pull—not unsuccessful if the terrified woman had not wound herself entanglingly round the deliverer's arms and legs. Somehow Ghergilda shook her off, and gave another heart-arresting pull.

The American, thrown on the bank, struggling like a rat, hurling abuse, sank on the grass, bruised, saturated, maddened—but saved. She crawled out of the Sagittorio's reach, she sat doubled up, she wrung her hands ; she felt for her purse and her ring, she wept with wild accusatory screams.

' Help ! Help ! Oh do come somebody ! Anybody ! That big woman is trying to drown me ! You girl there, can't you see I am dying ? Aren't you going to do *anything* to help me ?'

She did not think of getting up and seeking assistance, not even of raising an alarm. Nor did she wonder what had become of her enemy.

For the effort, the violence, the hurry, had been too much even for Ghergilda. She had overbalanced herself, lost her breath, lost her footing. She had fallen into the spate where it was deepest, where the current was strongest. It was not really very deep, the current was not really very strong. A hand at the moment could have saved her. But the screaming woman on the bank was too much lost in self-pity to give it.

Eight hours later, down-stream, at a considerable distance Ghergilda's body was found, battered beyond recognition.

X.

Signor Vincenzo thought it would have been better had the *Americana* been drowned in the flood and left Egidio free to redeem his promise to Ghergilda. Fortune refused to let him off so lightly. Years later the postman's son saw him in Chicago. He had inherited the Candy business, was rich, and lived in a fine flat. His wife had jewels, went to parties and had become enormously stout. There was no child except the little one who slept in the Campo Santo at Scanno of the Abruzzi. The mother said, 'Thank goodness !' but the father sighed.

Egidio did not know what to do with his money. Ill-shaved, ill-dressed, stooping, he sat in his counting house consumed by longing for the land of his birth, the people and the Green Pastures of his love. He tried never to think of Scanno. It reminded him, and how bitterly !—of Ghergilda.

BY THE WAY.

‘It really is too bad of them,’ remarked a lady whose vivacity belies her many years, as she perused the account of the recent exploit of the dictatorial pair, that heroic seizure of Albania, the existence of which, it appears, was so threatening to the ancient realm of Italy: ‘they will give us the trouble of learning geography all over again.’ Yes, and of unlearning it also, for it can hardly be thought by any but the immediate entourage and satellites of these two notable men that there is any possibility of permanence about such conquests. Of all the vanities, that of conquest, as all history proves, is the emptiest: it has been attempted age after age by mighty men and small, and never yet has it endured.

* * *

To those who take a superficial view of the discussions and pronouncements of American politicians it would appear that that formidable democracy has been engaging in an endcavour to determine whether it will abstain, even at a financial loss to itself, from all dealings with any warring country that might conceivably lead to entanglements or whether it will make money out of those who, in the event of an outbreak of war, will be the resisters of aggression. That alternative has no particular glory about it and could only lie before a country far enough off and powerful enough not itself to be in obvious danger. But it is only to a superficial view that this alternative appears. In reality there can be no doubt that very seldom in its history has American opinion been so stirred by the barbaric and repeated acts of the dictators, each in violation of his word, each accompany-

ing the act by fresh ' assurances ' which, with a genuine, if extreme, obtuseness he really expects will be believed ; and this even before the President's momentous and magnificent appeal.

* * *

And now the *London Mercury* gives up its independent life : it has wrought well and its ending is a loss. These are difficult days for any who seek to serve the spirit and the mind ; the age is inimical to such service. And yet it is possible that the *Mercury* was too catholic and so could not contrive to secure that continuance of support necessary to enable it to survive the difficulties of this philistine and unthoughtful age.

* * *

A word of commendation for a new venture : Columbia Records have now issued the first volume of *The Voice of Poetry*, that is to say, records of poetry spoken by Miss Edith Evans, to which Laurence Binyon has written a foreword and Wallace B. Nichols contributed notes. This first volume contains 6 10-inch records of short poems from Shakespeare to W. H. Davies, and it is hoped to succeed it by many more spoken by others. A venture to which to wish all success.

* * *

When a very young writer makes so great a mark with her first novel as Myrtle Johnston made with *Hanging Johnny* it is difficult indeed for her to live up to it : and many felt some disappointment accordingly over both her second and her third. Her volume of short stories, however, which succeeded were at all events adequate to prevent any readers from feeling that that first astonishing piece of work was a flash in the pan ; it was in many respects a fulfilment of the early promise. Now indubitably with her fourth full-length novel, *The Rising* (Murray, 7s. 6d. n.), Miss Johnston has

written once again a story which has—as was said of her first—‘grimness with its underlying compassion.’ This is a really fine tale of the hopeless strugglings of misguided Irish peasants against their oppressors in the unhappy Ireland in the ’sixties ; it would have been so easy to exaggerate or be melodramatic, that has been done so often, but it is written with an understanding, a sympathy and tenderness as well as a humour that softens the grimness and makes it all a human and a memorable narrative ; this is a rare and, indeed, beautiful piece of writing that will consolidate and enhance the author’s reputation.

★ ★ ★

Just as many a writer has tried—and failed—to make a successful story out of Irish troubles so have many tried—and failed to make an attractive book out of a diary of nature lore. And as Myrtle Johnston has succeeded in the one, so has Tickner Edwards succeeded in the other. Few have known the South Downs as long and intimately as he, yet knowledge is not enough : he brings to his new task *A Downland Year* (Methuen, 7s. 6d. n.) not only knowledge but a delicacy both of observation and phrase that makes this, the latest of his long line of books, a most welcome companion to all who love Sussex : whether to read through—or, perhaps better still—to keep by one’s bedside and read an entry every day, it is, as the sub-title tells, a series of ‘little sketches of the countryside for every day in the year,’ the study of which will much increase any reader’s knowledge and with his knowledge his love of some of the best things in life,—the sights, sounds, scents and lore of the Sussex Downs.

★ ★ ★

And how many, too, have tried to write a book of reminiscences of childhood and failed ? I do not know whether it is altogether a recommendation to be told by the publishers

how greatly Miss Irene Rathbone succeeded in work of a wholly different type ; her new book might well have been allowed to stand on its own merits—that it could abundantly do. *When Days were Years* (Faber, 7s. 6d. n.) is an admirable recreation of the ever-delightful time of childhood ; before we lay it down we are all of us back in the days of our own youth, with Iris, Philip, Bobbie—and last, but not least, the dog, and more no reader could ask.

* * *

Surely and steadily Coleridge is rising to that high place amongst the immortals for which he is clearly destined. Book follows book : to maintain the balance, I note with amusement that a writer of reviews—one of that class of least responsible and most cynical people—has recently described him as ‘ the most accomplished parasite of his own or any other age,’ a description as ludicrous as it is obnoxious. We have now in quick succession two notable books—*Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford University Press, 18s. n.), of which most careful and scholarly examination one can only say that one could wish it were not strictly confined to being, as its author, Sir E. K. Chambers, accurately calls it, ‘ a biographical study.’ Lovable—and impossible—as Coleridge was it is not for his life’s doings and misdoings that he is and will be remembered, but as the writer of some of the greatest lyrics in the language ; and rigidly to eschew all literary comment or criticism is greatly and unduly to limit the interest. Similarly, the other biography, *The Life of S. T. Coleridge*, by Laurence Hanson (Allen & Unwin, 21s. n.), is limited : that is also correctly described as ‘ the early years ’—and though it is in these that Coleridge’s golden glory shone brightest, it is only a portion of him. The two biographies are complementary and Mr. Hanson’s has the advantage of admirable illustrations—but even with

these two, indispensable as both are to our understanding of this marvellous man, there is still room for a third, a final and a full biography.

★ ★ ★

Another, and a very different, man is also the subject of a recent incomplete biography : Mr. W. Watkin Davies has written *Lloyd George 1863-1914* (Constable, 12s. 6d. n.). Why stop at 1914 ? Until 1919 Lloyd George was one of the world's dominating figures and to end just before his greatest period is surely illogical. The biography, written with Welsh knowledge and understanding, is of much interest nevertheless, and by no means as uncritical as its subject would no doubt wish. It will be valuable to the historian and to the writer, when the time comes, of the full biography of one of the most arresting, puzzling, and disappointing figures of our times : meanwhile we can read it with interest—and a sigh.

★ ★ ★

It is difficult to think of two men whose careers have been so closely contemporaneous and whose characters are so different as Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Midleton, for so long a Minister as St. John Brodrick : the latter's is an autobiography and is complete—*Records and Reactions 1856-1939* (Murray, 12s. 6d. n.) cover the author's whole life to date and an astonishingly full one it has been. If it has not the brilliance of Mr. Lloyd George's, it has at any rate more solidarity ; and, set down in retrospect, it shows not only the power of industry and application which might have been expected but also a vivacity and humour which were less to be looked for. The result is a book which is of great interest and a continual sidelight upon the political history of our times.

★ ★ ★

Seldom is it that any book is mentioned in these columns to which wide attention has already been drawn. It was a gratification to me when recently a man of public distinction told me that he found special interest in the books here dealt with because, for one reason or another, they had otherwise escaped his attention. But I cannot forbear, praised as it has been, to praise *Fray Mario*, by Helen Douglas Irvine (Longmans, 6s. n.). The jacket advertises its kinship with *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, and quite justly : this is of the same calibre and country. But to my thinking it is better than its distinguished prototype : it is altogether simpler, better at concealing its art, and touched with more beauty : it is, in brief, a most moving and delicate piece of work, and I am truly grateful for the duty laid upon me of reading it : for once duty was undiluted pleasure.

* * *

In these days Mexico has to take a back seat as far as news is concerned, but it is a country of continual interest nevertheless. If any dispute that let him look at either of the two new books concerning it, *Mexican Mosaic*, by Rodney Gallop (Faber, 15s. n.), who needs no introduction to readers of CORNHILL, or *An Eye Witness of Mexico*, by R. H. K. Marett (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d. n.) : he will hardly recognise that both deal with the same country. Mr. Gallop, aided not only by his own extremely beautiful photographs but also by his wife's clever drawings, deals with the mystery and charm of the old land, Mr. Marett is in the main the news-chronicler of the troubles of to-day. There is, however, scope for both—it is a question of taste which the reader prefers : at least both are authentic and authoritative.

THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 187.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 31st May.

Trust thou thy Love : if she be ———, is she not ——— ?

1. But each upbore a stately tent
Where cedar ——— in scented row
Kept out the flakes of the dancing brine,
2. 'Ha ! ha !' quoth he, 'full plain I see
The Devil knows how to ———.'
3. Where I made ——— — turn down an empty Glass !
4. Unlike are we, unlike, O princely Heart !
——— our uses and our destinies.
5. All treasure's uncertain,
Then down with your ——— !
In frolics dispose your pounds, shillings, and pence,

Answer to Acrostic 185, March number : 'Thanks to the *human heart* by which we live' (Wordsworth : 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality'). 1. *HeatH* (Shelley : 'Remorse'). 2. *UsE* (Emerson : 'Uriel'). 3. *MarciA* (Chaucer : 'Balade'). 4. *AppeaR* (Milton : 'L'Allegro'). 5. *NighT* (Thomas Hood : 'Autumn').

The first correct answers opened were sent by 'Square,' Brant Cottage, Osmington Mills, Weymouth, and Mr. F. Hamlyn Price, 7 Harley Gardens, The Boltons, S.W.10, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JUNE 1939.

WHOM THE GODS LOVE.

BY B. ELLIS DICK.

I.

MRS. FELLBRIDGE threw the last spadeful of earth on to her barrow with a sigh of relief. Picking up a trowel, she knelt to scrape the soil from the stone her spade-work had exposed.

It was a large, oblong stone, squared at the ends, cut away down each side at an angle, and there was some sort of carving on the face. 'An altar, sure enough. Now, what?' muttered Mrs. Fellbridge, scraping busily.

A mutilated inscription, rather roughly done, came to light. With her forefinger Mrs. Fellbridge traced out letters.

'Silvano Invict...P.lchr sim..
Pro Sal..Antig...i.....n...que'

Mrs. Fellbridge pushed away a curling wisp of hair, and sat back on her heels, surveying the altar with pleasure.

'Well, that's very nice,' she thought. 'To the invincible, most beautiful Silvanus; h'm. He was the wood-god. For the protection of—let me see—that might be Antigonus; yes, and somebody else. Very nice. But what on earth were the Romans doing here?'

Squatting among the earth and stones of the hollow she was digging to make a sunk garden, Mrs. Fellbridge twiddled the trowel between her palms, remembering scraps of archæological lore her husband had taught her. Behind her the garden drowsed in the iridescent shimmer of a summer

afternoon ; bees rioted in the catmint, and the air was filled with their soft buzzing and the chatter of nesting birds. A little breeze, laden with the scent of woodruff, pinks and peonies, played in the untidy curls of her grey head, bared to the sun. Beyond the piled earth lay the wide expanse of the Fells, darkest green where the heather sprang fresh after the spring burning ; in the distance, fading into soft blue where the horizon merged with the gentle sky.

The little sunk garden was well under way ; spadeful by spadeful, by the strength of her own back and arms, she was making it to complete the perfection of her garden, after seven years of hard though loving care.

Seven years. So long, since Walter died, and left her to make the best of life alone. And not such a bad thing she'd made of it, thanks to the garden, to whose peace she had turned for comfort in her loneliness. Her beloved garden, which only needed this sunk rockery, the little lily pond fed by the spring there, to make it one of the loveliest in the county.

And now, this. Three feet down below the apparently unbroken surface of the fell, a Roman Altar ; to the ' most beautiful god ' of the wild places. Perfect.

Stirred to further action, Mrs. Fellbridge leant forward and busied herself tidying up the loose soil. The trowel clinked on something hard, metallic. With eager, bony fingers she felt in the earth ; carefully, she prised it out. It was a small brooch, a fibula. Rubbing it gently with her fingers, colours appeared ; colours of faded, old enamel, bluey-green, rose red, a line of gold. . . .

' You want me ? ' asked a voice beside her.

Startled, Mrs. Fellbridge looked up. Sitting on a heap of earth was a charmingly impossible figure. The curly

gold head of a veritable cherub, set upon a delicious little white, child's body, which ended incongruously in the brown, hairy haunches and stiff, cloven-footed legs of a goat.

The Creature surveyed her with its head on one side, a half-wistful, half-rueful smile on its face.

'Good gracious. What are *you*?' exclaimed Mrs. Fellbridge. She still knelt on the warm earth, the fibula clasped in her left hand.

'It's entirely your own fault, you know; digging up my Altar and the Priest's brooch; so don't blame me,' said the cherub.

'Your Altar, indeed. Why, goodness me, child . . . you don't mean to say . . .?'

The little creature scratched his neck absently with his hoof; Mrs. Fellbridge, watching, felt that it was an action she had always envied the four-footed beasts.

'I'm afraid so,' he replied apologetically. 'You've exposed the Altar, and picked up the brooch with your left hand. What could you expect?'

'Silvanus,' breathed Mrs. Fellbridge.

'Well, not exactly. You see, the man who made this temple was half Greek, half Brigantine; when the rest of the Legions departed, my Greek came away into the Picts' country with his family; and, when he found a safe place to live, naturally he wished to raise an altar to the god who had saved him in the wilderness. So he chose Silvanus; but, being half Greek, the fellow imagined the god as a sort of Pan.'

'I see,' said Mrs. Fellbridge cheerfully. 'So you're all imagination.'

'Not at all,' replied the Creature, with dignity. 'My august progenitor . . .'

‘Your *what*?’ queried Mrs. Fellbridge.

‘I beg your pardon; my noble parent happened to be fairly free of responsibilities at the time; so he came over to Britain to answer the call, met a delightful British Oread up in the hills, and I’m the result.’

‘Good gracious!’ exclaimed Mrs. Fellbridge, vaguely feeling that she ought to disapprove.

‘Not at all; a MOST respectable union,’ grinned the cherubic one. His voice became reminiscent. ‘Very happy we all were, too. No one bothered about us, in this out-of-the-way place. But times change.’ He sighed, and nodded towards the altar.

‘The Scots overthrew *that*,’ he said. ‘And after that, of course, no one remembered Silvanus. It’s been rather lonely, the last few hundred years. On the whole, I’m glad you found it. It lets me out, you see. Thank you.’

Mrs. Fellbridge nodded dreamily. ‘Not at all,’ she murmured. Then, stirring restlessly, she smiled at the little figure. ‘Well, that’s that. I don’t *really* believe in you, my lad; you see, I’m a Churchwoman.’

The little god smiled, and, jumping down from his pile of stones, came and stood beside Mrs. Fellbridge as she knelt by the Altar.

‘Seeing’s believing,’ he whispered. Mrs. Fellbridge poked her trowel at him. At close quarters there was an unmistakable odour of goat.

‘Not good enough. Must be a touch of the sun,’ she said firmly. ‘I ought not be digging without a hat.’

‘Quite true,’ agreed the other. ‘Still, you can touch me. Try?’ He held out a little hand ingratiatingly.

Half irritated with herself, Mrs. Fellbridge found herself clasping it in her firm, brown one. It was real enough. The smiling face under the golden hair pleaded with her.

'You can't send me back again. Not on a nice fine day like this. Go on, obey your natural instincts. You rather like me, don't you?'

'Brat!' said Mrs. Fellbridge. But her voice quavered.

'You may call me Sill,' the little creature wheedled.

'Silly, yes, that's just what you are; silly.'

'Then I shall stay,' he carolled blithely.

'But what on earth can I *do* with you?' Mrs. Fellbridge looked at the small person with a tinge of disapproval. 'I can't have you in the house with those feet; I mean . . .'

'Oh, my legs? Well, they are rather a trial; but it's entirely hereditary, you know.'

Silvanus performed the neatest little hop-skip on the offending members, and twirled about. Mrs. Fellbridge felt a slight shock to see the impudent little goat's tail. She put out a hand to stop him, and it rested amid the curls of his golden head. There, almost concealed by the pretty hair, she suddenly noticed the rudiments of two tiny horns.

'Oh, get along with you,' exclaimed Mrs. Fellbridge, with an uprush of tenderness.

The little god grinned very humanly. 'You need not worry; no one will see me. It was only your finding the Altar that made *you* lucky.'

'Lucky! I don't know about that,' said Mrs. Fellbridge rather grimly. She looked at her watch. 'Dear me, tea-time. What on earth do you eat? Or, don't you?'

'Grapes; honey; fruit of the wild. Don't worry about me,' shrilled Silvanus, pirouetting merrily. 'Go and partake of your collation, Saviour of the gods; I will be here when you want me.' And, like a puff of thistle-down on the wind, he had vanished.

Mrs. Fellbridge shook the earth from her skirt, smiling. 'What a funny idea,' she said to herself. And went in to tea.

II.

As she approached the french window, she saw the inner door of her drawing-room thrown open, and heard the maid announce : 'The Rector and Mrs. Garside, madam.'

'How nice to see you ; how d'ye do, Mrs. Garside ? This is pleasant,' said Mrs. Fellbridge. 'No, I can't shake hands till I've washed ; gardening, as usual, you see. Isn't it a heavenly day ? Do sit down, both of you. I won't be long.'

'Well, this is comfortable, to be sure,' sighed the Rector, sinking into an easy chair, and mopping his warm face.

'George,' asked his wife, wrinkling her nose with some curiosity, 'does Mrs. Fellbridge keep goats ?'

'Goats ? What an idea.'

'Well, to be sure, it is rather a funny idea for Mrs. Fellbridge,' laughed Mrs. Garside. 'But, you know, I'm sure I noticed something ; something very *like* the smell of goats.'

'Pinks, my dear ; pinks,' explained her husband, with a comprehensive wave of the hand to the bowls of those flowers, with which the old room was filled. Certainly, their scent was heavy on the air.

'Why, of course ; how stupid of me ; that clovy smell. I was just saying,' added Mrs. Garside, as her hostess returned from washing, 'how very beautiful the pinks are.'

'Mrs. Simkins ; yes, she's very prolific,' agreed Mrs. Fellbridge absently, busying herself with the tea-pot. 'Sugar, Rector ?'

'Two, please. My wife doesn't take it,' replied the Rector, drawing his chair nearer the table.

Mrs. Fellbridge passed the cups of tea to her guests, and sat down. The sunlight through the open french window

caught the silver in her pretty, untidy hair, and threw up the lines of her brown, comely face. She gazed out into the garden, her thoughts busy. Surreptitiously, she put a hand in her pocket. Wrapped in her handkerchief was something hard. Then the fibula, at least, was no dream.

‘And so George and I thought it would be wonderful if you would let us have the garden for the Fête.’

Mrs. Garside’s soft voice broke in on her meditations. Mrs. Fellbridge came back to reality with a start.

‘The garden? Oh . . .’

‘It is so lovely, Mrs. Fellbridge, and those poor mothers would so enjoy your beautiful flowers.’

Mrs. Fellbridge glanced out of the window again. Framed against the sunlight as with an aura of gold, Silvanus stood, peeking in to the room from the top of the steps.

‘Go away at once!’ cried Mrs. Fellbridge. Silvanus, grinning, disappeared.

The Rector coughed nervously, and half rose.

‘Oh, I don’t mean you,’ exclaimed Mrs. Fellbridge contritely. ‘It was that . . . that chicken,’ she ended lamely.

‘Oh, was there a chicken? I didn’t notice,’ the Rector said mildly, sinking back into his chair. ‘Well, now, about Saturday, the eleventh.’

‘What? What about it?’ Mrs. Fellbridge forced herself to concentrate on what her guests were asking.

‘The Fête; for the Mothers’ Union from Denestown,’ Mr. Garside told her patiently. ‘Their Vicar wrote and asked me if I would join him in arranging a country outing for them. Poor things, they don’t often see the country, and with all those factories . . . Mrs. Garside and I thought we might combine it with the Sale of Work; the more the merrier, you know. So, if you would lend us the garden?’

Mrs. Fellbridge felt an unaccountable surge of distaste.

‘The garden? Oh, I couldn’t; I couldn’t have such a crowd . . . you see, I’m busy making a sunk garden with a lily pond, down below the steps, and the place is in such a mess.’

‘But we could run a nice wire netting across that end; and besides, the upper lawn is quite big enough, isn’t it, Emily?’

‘Perfect, dear; and such a view, too; and I do so love that copper-beech. George,’ added Mrs. Garside, with a bright smile, ‘I believe you have a roll of sheep-netting put away in the stable which would do beautifully.’

‘Then that’s settled,’ the Rector beamed, rubbing his hands. ‘I can’t tell you how grateful we are, Mrs. Fellbridge. Saturday week. And when you see the faces of those poor mothers you’ll feel well repaid.’

‘Oh, but Rector . . .’ Mrs. Fellbridge wanted to tell him that she disliked the whole idea intensely, but the innocent pleasure on his face disarmed her. Mrs. Garside, perhaps sensing her hesitation, broke in quickly.

‘Indeed, it is kind of you, dear,’ she exclaimed. ‘But I always tell George, if we’re in a difficulty, we’ve only to tell Mrs. Fellbridge, and it simplifies itself. I don’t know what we’d do without you . . . but we mustn’t even think of that, must we?’

In a dream, Mrs. Fellbridge watched them depart, waving to Mrs. Garside as the old Morris rounded the corner of the drive.

‘Well, they’ve gone at last!’ exclaimed Silvanus, appearing from behind an Austrian briar-bush, and capering gleefully on the grass border.

‘Stop that at once; look at the marks you’re making.’ Mrs. Fellbridge was annoyed. Then, recollecting herself, she exclaimed, ‘Nonsense, Dolly Fellbridge; you’re mad.’

‘Not mad at all. What did old Silenus-nose want?’

‘Silenus-nose! You’re a very rude little boy; that was the Rector, and he’s a martyr to indigestion, poor man.’

Silvanus laid a finger on his absurdly short nose, and winked. ‘The local priest, was he? They’ve changed since my day. Now, my particular Briton was a handsome fellow in a clean white toga.’

‘Surplice. He only wears that in Church,’ said Mrs. Fellbridge. She was absent-mindedly weeding the border.

‘Come and see your Altar,’ Silvanus invited her. Seeing the pucker of her brow, he took her unresisting hand, and led her down the garden.

‘Mothers’ Union indeed,’ muttered Mrs. Fellbridge. She felt quite ruffled; this was unlike her. She liked helping people.

Silvanus surveyed her frowning concentration thoughtfully. Tactfully, he wheedled out of her an explanation of the trouble. When, somewhat brusquely, she explained, rather thinking aloud, he nodded.

‘I understand. A sort of Fertility Cult,’ he observed. ‘What fun. And what do you sacrifice?’

‘Sacrifice? What are you talking about? Oh, I see. No, Silly, we do not sacrifice on our altars; and it is not at all what you think,’ Mrs. Fellbridge reproved. But her brain repeated the phrase, ‘Fertility Cult,’ and something in her wanted to laugh.

‘Not even your peace of mind? I call that sacrifice.’ Silvanus grinned. ‘When did you say it was, this Festival?’

‘Saturday week; the eleventh of June.’

Silvanus looked up at her moody face, and smiled broadly.

‘Well, you may call it June the eleventh; but doesn’t the date suggest something to you?’

She looked at him, puzzled. Scraps of forgotten classics hesitated on the brink of expression. Silvanus chuckled.

‘Yes, I see you remember ; the Matralia. Very appropriate.’

He was right, of course. Mrs. Fellbridge pondered. But what nonsense. These things didn’t happen.

They had come to the lower garden.

‘Look at that, and forget your British mothers,’ said the small voice.

Mrs. Fellbridge raised her eyes, and gasped.

Gone were the heaps of earth, the untidy piled stones and débris. The Altar stood on a moss-grown plinth. Below it, the ground fell in a semicircle of wide shallow steps, cut in the rocky substratum of the hillside, to a small, clear, square pool, perhaps a foot deep. The sides were of beautifully fitted stone-work, over the edges of which harts’-tongue ferns drooped gracefully, dipping in the limpid water. Round the pool was a level paved walk, from which, at regular intervals, old, slender stone pillars, weather-beaten, twined with honeysuckle, rose to the drooping birch trees. The surplus water from the pool gurgled gently down a heather-hung channel to lose itself among the mosses of the fell beyond the garden.

Mrs. Fellbridge brushed a hand across her eyes, and looked again. It was a little Temple such as she had seen far off in Attica, in those long-gone days of wandering with Walter among the treasures of archæological research.

She looked down. Standing meditatively, chewing a long grass, Silvanus the demi-god raised clear blue eyes to her face and smiled. ‘But ; but how ?’ whispered Mrs. Fellbridge. He waved a small hand carelessly.

‘There are still a few People in the Hills,’ he said.

The woman went down on her knees beside him, her arm

in its grey woollen sleeve lying across the bare shoulders of the little god. 'Dear God, don't mock me,' she cried softly, the prayer to her own familiar, reasonable God of the English rising spontaneously to her lips. The haunting beauty of this oddly substantial vision was almost more than she could bear. And she thought of her husband. Dear Walter, so sure of the permanence of the human spirit, the permeable quality of matter and time. How he would have loved this little shrine ! And she fancied she could hear his quiet voice discussing the ancient mysteries. A sense of peace rose in her heart.

'I am happy that you like it,' the cheerful treble of Silvanus broke in on her reverie. 'Now, don't kneel too long ; it's rather damp, and you know you ought to take care, with your rheumatism.'

III.

The next few days passed like a pleasant but muddled dream. They were days of languorous June sunshine and cool breezes off the Fells. Days broken by vaguely irritating interviews with her cook, who complained that the school-children must be stealing the ripe fruit, for the bushes were stripped and the garden littered with skins. The chauffeur-gardener, too, had a grievance that sheep were somehow getting in, though he could find no holes in the fences ; but there were the marks of their hooves all over, spoiling his paths and beds.

But these minor worries were easily offset by long dreamy hours when Mrs. Fellbridge experienced an unfamiliar sense of exhilaration, as if some inner and forgotten self, vigorous and joyous with youth, possessed her. Then longing for the beauty of the Roman temple guided her steps down to the lower garden. In vain she reasoned with herself that she

was the victim of illusion. The illusion persisted. The shrine remained obstinately real. She spent long, slow hours there alone, or with Silvanus, whose presence she had come to accept, a thing incredible but very sweet ; sitting idly contemplative, deeply satisfied. In these hours she was aware of two selves in her, one which ridiculed, afraid to accept the evidence of sight and touch ; one which knew, gladly, the beauty and the truth of it.

Fighting her belief, this other self found an unusual warmth in her heart for the little, mischievous creature with the face of an angel and the legs of a goat, to whom she owed this incredible happiness, whose very being her more rational side persistently discredited. He had an exasperating but intriguing habit of appearing out of nowhere ; he broke flowering branches off her favourite shrubs to fan her when it was hot, and stole the fruit from gooseberries and currants with cheerful unconcern. He was impudent and grave by turns, and he addressed her with a casual affection which both irritated and attracted her.

But chiefly, through these summer days, she was possessed by thoughts of Walter. Her husband had never seemed so near to her in all the years since his death. She was amazed by this thrilling sense of proximity, and felt in the secret deeps of her being that he might appear at any moment. This inward happiness completely filled her.

And, all this time, she was busy with the arrangements for the Garden Fête. The Rector had invited Mrs. Gibb to open the Sale of Work. Helena and Charles Gibb were old friends. Charles had been Walter's Brigade Commander during the war, and, since his death, they had been her most intimate friends. It was strange, therefore, that despite their frequent visits, she did not mention the Roman temple to them. But some inner reticence withheld her. She

hesitated to put it to the test of other eyes. So she bore with her, throughout the week, the feeling of a secret.

One afternoon they called earlier than usual. Mrs. Fellbridge was talking to Silvanus beside the temple pool, when she saw them in the upper garden. She had a guilty feeling of being caught. What would Charlie think of Silvanus? It was too absurd. But her anxiety was needless. The god had disappeared.

The General had heard the sound of voices and laughter. He saw Mrs. Fellbridge hurrying up the garden, and looked for her companion. She waved gaily.

'Hullo, Charlie. Hullo, Helena. How are you?' As she hastened to meet them she felt confused. She wanted to stop them before they came near enough to see the temple.

'How d'ye do, Dolly? Hope we haven't disturbed you, dear; we have to go down to Sidham, and there were one or two things I still want to discuss about the Fête, so we came early,' Helena greeted her. Mrs. Fellbridge felt herself blushing as she shook the General's lean friendly hand. To hide her confusion, she kissed Helena on both cheeks, a cordiality which surprised her friend, for Dolly Fellbridge was not a gushing woman.

'Where's your friend, Dolly? Don't let us interrupt,' asked Charles, looking round with appraising eyes. The garden was at its best; azaleas flamed against the yews, broom blazed in the borders among the pinks and lupins. A late-flowering northern garden, with a background of silver birch, sweeping moor, and clear sky.

'Oh, no, I'm alone,' Mrs. Fellbridge answered him, uneasily glancing behind her. Helena looked at her curiously. What was worrying Dollie?

'Oh, I thought I heard you laughing with someone,' Charles said idly.

Mrs. Fellbridge's blush mounted higher, to her great discomfort. 'I *was* laughing ; I had a silly idea,' she replied. Charles rubbed his chin.

'What a gorgeous day,' he remarked.

'Come along inside ; there are such a lot of things I want to discuss, too, and if you're going to Sidham, you might do some shopping for me, will you ?' She turned and led them towards the house. Behind her back, Charles glanced at his wife. But Helena was staring at Dolly's back with a puzzled expression. She, too, had heard that laughter ; and she could have sworn there were two voices ; Dollie's own, rather deep tones, and another, a childish, rippling laugh.

Suddenly the General paused. His eyes were on the smooth lawn under his feet.

'I say, Dollie ; sheep getting in somewhere ?' He bent to look closer.

'Sheep ?' Mrs. Fellbridge stopped to look. An expression of annoyance came over her face. 'Oh dear ; I didn't notice that.'

Charles looked up with surprise.

'By Jove, Dollie, I'm not sure ; if this wasn't England, I'd say goats.' He paused. For Dollie's clear grey eyes were clouded, almost hostile. What on earth . . . ? He coughed.

'You'd better write direct to Dick Talbot, and ask him to look to your fences. These farmers won't repair fences, I know, so it's no use asking Dodds.'

'Yes, Charlie. I will,' she said meekly.

As they drove away later, Helena Gibb said seriously to her husband, 'Charlie, I'm worried about Dollie. I don't think she's well ; that flush looked like heart to me. You know what the doctor said, when she was nursing Walter '

‘H’m. Yes, I remember. Thought she was a bit odd, myself.’

‘I do wish she wouldn’t work so hard in that garden,’ Helena said.

The General was silent. He was wondering about those hoof-marks.

IV.

The day of the Fête was fine but overcast. Standing at the french window, Mrs. Fellbridge sniffed the air anxiously. There was a sultry heaviness which she distrusted. She did hope this oppression did not mean thunder. What on earth could she do with all those mothers and babies if it rained? She did not feel in the mood for mothers and babies.

Shaking off the unwonted depression, she went out. The garden rang with the sound of hammering. She found Mr. Garside fixing up the side-shows, an occupation which gave him enormous pleasure. The village ladies arrived in relays, laden with bulging parcels, all beaming at Mrs. Fellbridge. The Rector’s good spirits were infectious, and everyone worked with a will.

Mrs. Fellbridge helped old Mrs. Brown to fasten hundreds of bright paper roses to the laurels. She felt slightly ashamed of her distaste for the gaudy atrocities, for the roses represented hours of patient work. They were all numbered, and a prize would be given for the winning number; it was a tea-set, given by the grocer. Mrs. Fellbridge, praising its utility, secretly hoped that she would not draw the lucky number.

After laying out the various stalls, the garden began to look very full. Hot and dusty, Mrs. Fellbridge had only time to snatch some lunch standing.

About half-past one, dressed in a soft grey silk frock, with

a shady black lace hat perched on her shining curls, she strolled down the garden, making her way towards the secret temple. She longed to sit peacefully beside the quiet pool, and lose herself in timeless reverie.

Her tiredness evaporated like mists in the sun as she hurried down the lower garden. Happiness, that joyous sense of youth, came welling up in her. Again she felt the nearness of her husband, and was glad. And once again she experienced that little, not unpleasant sense of shock as she saw Silvanus waiting for her by the Altar steps. She greeted him with pleasure, for she realised that she had not seen the little creature for some days, and that she had missed him.

‘Where have you been all this time?’ she asked; but absent-mindedly, for she was feasting her eyes on the pool. How peaceful it was; how right. She sighed, pleasantly relaxed.

Silvanus hopped, and grinned cheerfully at her.

‘I’ve been to see a friend on your behalf,’ he said, and his voice emanated virtue.

‘On my behalf? Who was that?’ she asked idly, one half of her consciousness resting lightly in the quiet of the pool.

‘Oh, you don’t know her,’ he replied. He chuckled. ‘It was one of the British mothers.’

‘What do you mean?’ Her mind leapt with painful clarity to the village institute, where, at that moment, she knew the Mothers’ Union were finishing their lunch before coming on to the Fête.

Silvanus scratched his nose reflectively.

‘Haven’t you heard of them?’ he asked, surprised. ‘There were several of them in my day; they were the goddesses of the Legions, you know. Great favourites

with the men on the Wall. Most of them went away with the Eagles, but the British mothers stayed here. I went to see one of them whom I used to know. Hadn't seen her for centuries. But you women are wonderful. She hadn't changed a bit.'

'I don't know what you're talking about,' exclaimed Mrs. Fellbridge irritably. The recollection of her coming duties had shattered her momentary peace of mind, and she had remembered several things still waiting to be done. That rather bewildering feeling of two personalities came over her again. She rose to go back to the house.

'Listen to me a minute, Silvanus. Please behave yourself, and be very careful this afternoon. I have a lot of people coming, and you must not keep popping up and calling me.' She turned away.

The little god nodded.

'I know. The Denestown mothers,' he said cheerfully. 'That's all right, dearest. You can safely leave them to me and the Mater Dea.'

Mrs. Fellbridge, her mind preoccupied, had not paid much attention; suddenly his words half-penetrated to her consciousness. Something startled, caused her thoughts to hover, uncertain.

'*What* did you say?' she asked quickly. But the god had vanished.

At half-past two, Mrs. Gibb formally opened the Fête. The Mothers' Union were in extremely good spirits. There were about seventy of them, and innumerable children, and as there was a large number of village people, the lawn resounded with laughter and chatter. The oppressive heat of the afternoon did not appear to affect them. Mrs. Fellbridge, going round with Helena, and watching her

sensible purchase of useful articles, was struck with an almost physical awareness of the general good humour. How they did enjoy this sort of party. It must be a pleasant break in the monotony of their lives.

A pity, though, that their laughter was so discordant ; it struck like the beat of little hammers in her aching head.

Trying to find something possible to buy among the heaps of flannel atrocities on the Ladies' Guild stall, she saw General Gibb, a fixed and determined smile on his face, intent on doing his duty. He, too, sought a possible purchase. She was struck with the eagerness with which the farmer's wife helping Mrs. Garside rushed to serve him. Surely it was unnecessary for him to joke so familiarly with the woman ? Their sense of humour was so different, thought Mrs. Fellbridge, as she saw the woman hold up a tiny baby's vest to Charles, giggling. The implication was obvious, and she couldn't help a ridiculous vision of him resplendent in the little woollies ; but their laughter was just a little boisterous. He was finally served with some shooting socks, and turning, winked at Mrs. Fellbridge.

'Nice, aren't they ?' he remarked cheerfully. 'I say, Mrs. Garside,' he added, 'I've promised to open the rose-garden ; do come and help me and choose the first rose. I'm sure you'll be lucky.'

'Dear Charles,' thought Mrs. Fellbridge. 'He always does the right thing.' But she saw the envious glances of the other stall-holders as the pair walked away, and wondered if Mrs. Garside knew she looked so preposterously delighted. An elderly woman in grey drew aside to let them pass. Mrs. Fellbridge saw that she noticed the curious pleasure of the Rector's wife, too, for there was an enigmatical and rather mocking smile on her face. Mrs. Fellbridge wondered who she was, but she lost sight of her in the crowd.

A little trill of music caught her ear. Someone playing a flute? She paused to listen, for the air had been pleasing; but the noise was so appalling that she could not catch it again. A pity. Whoever it had been could play well.

She wandered aimlessly across the lawn, chatting to her guests. At the sweet-stall she noticed the elderly Vicar of Denestown engaged in an animated conversation with little Miss Potts, the organist. He brandished an extremely sticky lump of toffee in her face, until in self-defence, she opened her mouth, bashfully, and allowed him to pop the dangerous morsel inside; a proceeding which caused a good deal of merriment among the onlookers.

‘How ridiculous people are,’ thought Mrs. Fellbridge. ‘They wouldn’t dream of behaving so childishly on any normal occasion.’ Normal. That was what was so curious. Somehow, it didn’t seem quite a normal occasion; she was beginning to feel that there was an undercurrent which she did not understand.

Mr. Garside begged her to come and fix a number on his ‘guy.’ ‘The poor fellow has a nasty pain, Mrs. Fellbridge,’ he laughed; ‘do see if you can guess where it is; there’s a lovely prize.’

‘Dear me, I am sorry,’ smiled Mrs. Fellbridge, pinning her ticket to the guy’s forehead. ‘I think he has a headache, poor thing.’

‘I shouldn’t be surprised; it is hot, isn’t it?’

‘Very hot; I hope we shan’t have thunder,’ Mrs. Fellbridge said, moving away to watch the darts competition. She had seen an ominous, coppery-coloured bank of clouds on the eastern horizon, and the still air felt vibrant with electricity. Mrs. Fellbridge felt the contrast between the potent silence of the elements and the strident noise of

people ; and saw the garden as an entity, withdrawn from all these incongruities, waiting, expectant and eager, for the threatened storm. The dry soil had a thirsty appearance ; her own body felt taut, quivering, the blood in her veins pulsing rapidly, as if she, too, was excited ; she knew a momentary longing, almost anguish, for the storm to break the tension in the air. She felt as if she, like the garden, was parched, dried up with the long lonely years, waiting to renew herself. She could enjoy the tumult of the elements. And, as she thought of the beneficence of rain on dry earth, she fancied she heard again, the music ; thin, exquisite, exciting.

‘What about some tea, Dollie ?’ asked Helena Gibb, taking her arm to attract her attention. Mrs. Fellbridge smiled over her shoulder.

‘I do so wonder who it is playing,’ she said, listening.

‘Playing ?’

‘Yes ; those pipes ; a flute, or something.’

‘Oh, was there ? I didn’t notice. Some of these village boys play the tin whistle quite well,’ Helena said carelessly. ‘Do come and have tea. I feel absolutely parched with thirst.’

‘Yes, do let’s have some.’

They went to the tea-tables under the copper-beech. Mrs. Fellbridge sat down with a sigh of relief.

‘You have been good, Helena. What on earth will you do with all those things ?’ she exclaimed.

Her friend laughed. ‘Oh, they come in for the next bazaar,’ she said.

Shrieks of laughter from the shrubbery disturbed their tea ; three-legged races were in progress, and some girls rushed wildly past the tea-tables, chased by the older boys, in a boisterous, unruly manner. Mrs. Fellbridge noticed

that the girls were not really trying to evade their pursuers ; their backward glances struck her as bold, provocative. She was struck anew by the rackety quality of the noise. It was excessive.

‘It’s being a great success, Dollie,’ Helena told her, watching the people swarming on the lawn.

‘If noise is any indication, I suppose it is,’ replied her friend grimly. Helena looked at her with surprise.

‘Oh well, there’s bound to be noise with so many people ; they *are* happy, Dollie.’

Mrs. Fellbridge felt that rowdy, rather than happy, described them better. She never remembered such a noisy Sale of Work. It must be the inclusion of the town element. Out of the corner of her eye she was watching the Vicar of Denestown, seated at a near-by table with Miss Potts from the sweet-stall. His manner seemed so familiar, almost flirtatious, he made her feel quite uncomfortable. He leant across the table, gazing at Miss Potts until, Mrs. Fellbridge thought, the poor little thing looked quite flustered. Surely the clergy should not be quite so blatant in their attentions.

She caught herself up sharply. ‘Don’t be such an old woman, Dolly Fellbridge,’ she told herself. ‘How perfectly ridiculous.’ But her irritation grew with every moment, though she chattered brightly to Helena. How oppressive it was. If only there was a breath of air.

When she returned to the upper lawn after tea, she stood astounded. A game of blind man’s buff was in progress. The Rector, a handkerchief tied about his eyes, rushed wildly and rather giddily about in the centre of a ring of factory women, who, hands clasped, pranced round with exaggerated dancing steps, singing an old catch. The Rector pounced gaily at first one and then another, and

screams of laughter rewarded his efforts. Some of the women seemed quite hysterical.

'What *is* the matter with all these people !' thought Mrs. Fellbridge. 'How stupid of the Rector to encourage them. No need for such silly games. They don't usually behave like this. It's all very odd,' she thought, with a little involuntary shiver of distaste. Like a nightmare.

A hand on her arm drew her attention. The Vicar of Denestown, laughing at the antics of the game, beamed at her.

'Isn't it delightful to see how happy everyone is, Mrs. Fellbridge ? Such a jolly Fête. How good of you to have us all.'

'Not at all,' murmured his hostess.

'Won't you join in ? Such fun.' His face radiated delight.

'Oh, I think not,' said Mrs. Fellbridge hastily. 'It's so hot.'

The Vicar snatched off his hat, and waved violently to someone. Mrs. Fellbridge, with intense surprise, saw it was little Miss Potts who beckoned to him so imperiously.

'Excuse me ; I promised . . .' The Vicar beamed again, and shouted, yes, actually shouted, 'Coming, Toots,' and ran across the crowded lawn to join her.

'Good gracious, has *everyone* gone mad ?' she exclaimed aloud. It really was extraordinary, the atmosphere seemed positively abandoned ! For the blind man's buff had devolved into a rowdy sort of catch-as-catch-can ; both clergymen, and several of the village men, were chasing the giggling women about the lawn ; the laughter was raucous, indecent. Those elder villagers who were not running in the game, gathered in little facetious groups, pointing out the antics of the players and making half-scandalised comments.

'I think I'd better do something ; perhaps if I organised some sports. . . .' Mrs. Fellbridge wondered. She moved forward to intercept the Rector. She was thoroughly agitated. To allow the Fête to degenerate into such a riotous party was incredible, the Rector must be mad. The place was like a fun-fair.

Then she stopped in absolute consternation.

Mrs. Garside, hatless, and crowned with paper roses, came tripping, dancing, across the lawn. High above her head she waved a tiny, pink baby's vest, and she was singing ; singing clearly, if breathlessly, the Jewel Song from *Faust*.

Her appearance completed the rout. An unrestrained burst of laughter acclaimed her progress as she tripped across to the Rector, and presented him with the vest, prize in a penny lottery. The usually dignified old man clutched the prize in a paroxysm of amusement, while the hot, exhausted and dishevelled women of the Mothers' Union flung themselves on the grass, helpless with laughter.

Mrs. Fellbridge felt quite sick with disgust, but some impish sense of the ridiculous seized her momentarily. It *was* ridiculous ; those sober old Garsides, prancing about like clowns to the riotous entertainment of the *hoi polloi*. But . . .

'Ridiculous !' thought Mrs. Fellbridge. A wave of sheer anger overwhelmed her. It was not ridiculous, it was disgraceful ; an appalling lapse of taste. One could carry jocularly too far, especially with these people. So undignified. How *could* they ?

She felt ill. The noise, the heat ; it was terribly hot, surely ? The unrestraint and this *peculiar* atmosphere affected her physically. She must have some quiet. If only there was a breeze ! Seized with the desire for quiet,

for a moment's privacy to overcome this giddiness, and marshal her faculties to cope with the situation, she turned and made her way instinctively towards the lower garden.

It was then that she noticed the silent, attentive, rather furtive-looking group of women beside the lilacs. Struck by an indefinable something in their attitudes, she hurried to see what was happening here.

They were gathered round that same tall, strange woman, in the grey garments, whom Mrs. Fellbridge had seen earlier in the afternoon. The woman seemed immersed in something she held between her hands. What was it? Surely . . . oh, surely not . . .

The woman was gazing into a crystal globe, speaking in low tones, and her audience craned forward in awed silence, intent upon her words. Fortune-telling. Who on earth was this? Some one from Denestown, Mrs. Fellbridge supposed. This was really too much, she thought indignantly. She swept forward.

'What is all this? Who are you, my good woman, and who gave you permission to tell fortunes here? I cannot allow it; we have no licence for fortune-telling, and the Rector would be most . . .'

The woman in the grey garments raised her eyes to meet Mrs. Fellbridge's stormy gaze. And all the righteous anger, all the unacknowledged but painful protests of her outraged fastidiousness, receded, faded, merged in overwhelming recognition of the Power which poured out at her through those dark, unfathomable eyes.

'Mater Matuta te salutet.'

The sonorous Latin, spoken in low deep tones, rolled over Mrs. Fellbridge's consciousness like the mutter of thunder in high hills. 'Oh, God,' whispered Mrs. Fellbridge, her hand at her throat. She was afraid. She felt

the earth tremble beneath her ; she was aware of it, the dark earth, quick with life, the endless upthrusting forces of growth, matter struggling to give expression to the Eternal. Time was not ; and as she stood poised between fear and knowledge, she heard the woman speak again.

‘Have no fear,’ said the sonorous voice. ‘There is no evil here ; for Evil is of Time, and the gods are timeless. What you fear is but the impulse of life in nature, in which is neither good nor evil, for it is part of the all. Peace be with you.’

The Grey Woman smiled on Mrs. Fellbridge, a long slow smile like the kiss of the sun on ripening corn. The group of spectators, who had fallen back, uncomfortably aware of strange happenings, parted to allow her to pass. She went with a gliding motion, and the awed women, casting frightened glances at Mrs. Fellbridge, standing so erect and still, broke up, moved quickly away. Mrs. Fellbridge stood there alone.

The strange, alarming feelings which had silenced her quick anger, left her shaken, almost terrified. For a moment her mind was blank ; and then into that dark void came a thought ; a memory. She heard the voice of Silvanus, speaking to her by the pool that afternoon : ‘Leave it to me and the Mater Dea.’

She shivered. Brushed a hand across her eyes. She remembered another phrase, spoken idly, days ago ; yes, the day on which the Rector had arranged the Fête.

‘A sort of Fertility Cult.’

She gave a little cry, a moan, and swayed giddily.

She felt a steadying hand under her elbow. Charles Gibb, very spruce and cool, looked at her with puzzled eyes.

‘What’s up, Dollie ? Faint ? Here, hold up, my dear. Come and sit down. What’s the matter ?’

He found her a chair by the empty tea-tables, and stood dutifully in front of her, whilst he watched the scene on the lawn. He thought it was stupid of the Rector to allow these people to get so out of hand. Those awful Mothers' Union women squatted everywhere, wildly hilarious, looking almost as if they were the worse for drink. Children, quite unchecked by their elders, raced about, shouting and fighting like little savages. The garden was a bedlam of heat and noise.

Mrs. Fellbridge, wearily removing her hat to rest her throbbing temples, saw the Rector, demonstrating the more intricate footwork of a Highland fling to a grinning group of boys. She gave a little shiver.

'It's like a revel!' she exclaimed. The General, distressed, looked down at her. She looked very ill. Suddenly she felt a drop of rain. 'By Jove, we're in for a storm,' he exclaimed.

At that moment Mrs. Fellbridge saw Silvanus beckoning to her from the steps leading to the lower garden. She sprang to her feet. 'Silvanus.'

'What?' asked Charles, surprised. She laid an urgent hand on his arm.

'I understand, now! Charles, be a dear, get these people into the house, or the garage, before it rains; they'll be drenched. I *know* what's the matter now. And I must go at once, to stop him, before anything worse happens. Please hurry.'

Giving him a little push towards the house, she ran lightly among the crowd towards the steps.

A peal of thunder crashed overhead. There came a second of stunned silence; then the garden was a seething crowd of panic-stricken women and children, all pushing and rushing for shelter.

The General was caught in a stream of people fighting to get into the house. He saw his wife standing at the french window, shepherding them inside, and picked up a small frightened child who clung to his leg.

‘I’ll send Helena after her,’ he thought, anxious about Dollie. He put the child down inside the window. Mr. Garside was soothing the frightened women. He smiled consolingly.

‘Only thunder, ladies ; and we need rain,’ he reminded them gently.

Helena took Charles by the arm. She spoke quietly but urgently. ‘Charles, we must go and look for Dollie. I saw her running like a mad thing down the steps. I don’t like it, and the storm isn’t over yet.’

‘You’re right, my dear. I’ll go at once.’

‘I’m coming with you,’ said Helena firmly. ‘She’s ill, I’m sure. There seems something very odd here this afternoon.’

‘There is,’ agreed her husband grimly. ‘Come on, then ; we must get her indoors before the rain really starts.’

V.

Mrs. Fellbridge saw Silvanus hop down the steps. She ran after him, to find him dancing all over her favourite flower-beds. After everything else, this roused her to fury. She ran down the steps faster than she had run for years, calling to him to stop. But he leapt higher in the air, laughing, and capered on. Mrs. Fellbridge raced after him, her only thought now to catch him and shake him until his little white teeth rattled.

‘I’ll teach him, the little jackanapes ; Fertility Cult, indeed !’ she thought. Never, in fifty years, had such a passion of real anger possessed her. She ran, heedless of

under, darkness, or the scattered drops of rain. Breathless, he came to the Altar steps.

'Silvanus. Where are you?' she called, gasping painfully. Her heart pounded tumultuously, iron bands encircled her chest, her head felt pierced with red-hot spikes.

Silence answered her. She stood irresolute, fighting the pain, listening.

Out of the trees behind the pool came the whisper of a little, maddening tune. Such a tune as might have been played by a shepherd in Arcady, long, long ago. A lilting, faërie tune such as Pan played, in the orange groves of Greece, when the world was very young. Her anger dying away, Mrs. Fellbridge stared across the temple pool, and saw her husband standing there. Her young husband, tall, fair, smiling at her, as if he had just left his books to call her in to tea. All her fears died out of heart and mind, together with all the loneliness of the years. She was young, ardent, a girl meeting her lover with shyness and uplifted heart.

Charles and Helena, hurrying to the top of the steps, saw Mrs. Fellbridge, and paused involuntarily. For about her, as she stood, there played a strange light, as if of melted gold. They saw her fling out both hands, and heard her cry.

'Walter, my darling.'

A terrible flash of lightning split the very heavens, followed by a tremendous roar of thunder. They saw Mrs. Fellbridge fall. Charles leapt the steps in one, rushed forward. Then halted, putting out a hand to stop his wife.

Mrs. Fellbridge lay, face downward, across a large, squared stone, among piles of earth and stone, where there was a half-finished excavation in the bank. The General knelt to pick her up. In the flash of lightning which

followed, he saw that on the face of the stone there was time-blurred lettering. He lifted Mrs. Fellbridge gently.

She was smiling, peacefully ; she looked very young. She was dead. In her left hand she clasped something. When the General gently prised open her fingers, he saw that it was some sort of brooch. He thought it was a Roman fibula.

ADOLFA'S LOVER.

(Angiolina Speaks)

*Adolfa has a lover,
He comes from over the mountains ;
He has such wonderful teeth and eyes
As are not to be found the wide world over,
Ah, Signora,
Adolfa's lover !*

*I shall be married at Easter
In a little church in the mountains ;
I shall live where the flocks from the wind take cover—
He sings as he comes, with a splendid voice,
Ah, Signora,
Adolfa's lover !*

*He whom I wed has a casa,
And a goat, and a garden of herbs on the mountain,
And we shall be rich when the year is over—
But that once you might see him, and hear him sing,
Ah, Signora,
Adolfa's lover !*

BEATRICE CREGAN.

THE DRUMMERS.

BY DOUGLAS GORDON.

OF all natural sounds the most interesting, perhaps, are those which wild creatures produce by the employment of faculties other than their vocal organs. Most naturalists are familiar with the drumming of woodpeckers, about which there has been so much correspondence within the past year or so. Others have listened to the eerie booming with which certain species of grouse make mystery in the purple gloom of the North American twilight, but there is nothing more remarkable than the vibrant, humming twang of the common snipe's pinions as this curious little bird describes its interminable aerial circlings over our own marshes in springtime.

Surprisingly few country people have any knowledge of this note, even though the moorland air vibrates with its pulsations. This, no doubt, is largely due to the innumerable counter-attractions, the carnival of wild bird music which delights the aural senses at the same time as snipe are drumming. Skylarks are aloft in the full riot of song, with meadow-pipits to swell the orchestra at lower levels and in a corresponding key. Where the gorse-gold flames, linnets, hedge-sparrows and yellowhammers contribute their full quota. Far and near, the moorland rocks in unison with the curlew's trill, and at the first hint of an alien presence the green plover are a-wing, clamorous and insistent in their demands upon an intruder's attention. It is little wonder, therefore, that a faint sound, so high in the blue that its source is usually invisible, should escape any ear

except those strained to distinguish it from the many distracting elements, or that the casual passer-by should proceed upon his way, retaining no impression of something which was unclassified if not actually unheard.

It must also be remembered that the summer haunts of the snipe are seldom visited after dark when the bird's activities are most noticeable. Though widely distributed, its breeding range is local, being mainly confined to extensive swamps with a preference for those of the uplands where, unless deliberately sought, it attracts little attention. Indeed, if noticed at all, the sound is not as a rule identified by the ordinary countryman whose attitude towards nocturnal harmonies is vague at best. In any case, the snipe is rarely suspected as the musician. Upon Dartmoor, the ghostly sound emanating at dusk from the treacherous mist-shrouded mires, and possessing that peculiar muffled quality which wide spaces impart, would probably not be investigated too closely by the passing moorman on his mountain pony. He would not necessarily regard it as supernatural, but like the unearthly squall of the apprehensive vixen who watches his progress from the ridges, or the weird meanderings of *ignis fatuus*, it conveys too strong a hint of the uncanny, superstition still figuring, largely if subconsciously, in the West-countryman's mentality. Upon the lowlands of Devon and Somerset, when dusk falls, the composite but vague identity of the 'landrail' embraces the activities of most nocturnal birds, whereas in Wales—that land of picturesque phraseology and synonym—the twilight drummer has been styled the 'Hoolet of the Bogs,' although the precise definition of this species, whether avian or spectral, is not quite clear. In the case of other localisms, such as 'Heather-bleater' or 'Air-goat,' the same uncertainty exists, and it is doubtful whether many rustics connect the mysteri-

ous musician of the summer night with the little brown bird which they flush from the spring-heads during December or January.

Though not usually regarded as diurnal, the species is more or less active at all hours, and throughout the breeding season is seldom still. When the early summer sun is high, far from becoming quiescent, the mated snipe, now aglow with amorous emotion, ascends into altitudes which even the soaring skylark seldom attempts. There with the fresh green world, blue-veiled and faintly a-shimmer, spread wide below, he describes his interminable evolutions, indulging in the frequent fantastic gyrations by means of which the ecstacy of his soul finds expression. It seems curious that a little bird designed by Nature to spend the greater part of his life upon the wet ground, from which during the winter months he rises only with extreme reluctance, should throughout this brief season develop into a veritable sprite of the air, his slender wings acquiring a buoyancy and indefatigability unexcelled even by the most accomplished feathered aviators. Indeed, as the long day draws to its close it brings no limit to the snipe's activities. Rather the contrary, for as twilight deepens the vitality of such birds becomes accentuated under normal conditions, and this tendency remains unaffected by the diurnal energies of the breeding season. With night's approach, however, the swooping, circling bird comes nearer to earth, and in the hush of sundown the drumming note acquires a startling clarity. It seems scarcely credible at times that pinions so minute and fragile can produce a sound so far-reaching. On a still night it becomes clearly audible a mile away, and as the rapid circles widen with the gathering darkness, it may be heard over land and from among surroundings to which the wild mysterious little bird is himself a complete stranger.

The snipe beats his first roll when early birds begin to sing, and the performance roughly corresponds with the duration of the avian orchestra. Even as the celebrated dawn chorus greets the May sunrise, so the weird aeolian tattoo hails the kindling of the summer stars, and not the least remarkable snipe concert personally heard was given as a fitting close to Midsummer Day last year, which for some unaccountable reason was notable for an almost unprecedented festival of snipe 'music.' The date mentioned was somewhat late in the year for such an exhibition. It took place above a marshy common upon which snipe have never before been known to breed, although the place has always been a favourite haunt of green plover. The night being warm and still, the notes were borne over the air for an almost incredible distance, and upon nearer investigation the skyscape seemed thronged with invisible musicians, floating like spirits under the stars and filling the night with suggestive unearthly harmonies.

Like other branches of avian activity, the proceeding is subject to influences unknown to man and is unaffected, so far as observation can establish, by atmospheric conditions or lunar phases. Upon certain nights the concert is in full progress, on others, apparently equally suitable, the auditorium is as silent as though neither bird voice nor thrumming pinions had ever made melody in its solitudes. One and all, the birds are either inspired with frenzied energy or they are still, and man can do no more than note the effect, scarcely hazarding a conjecture as to the governing agency.

The sound, though usually produced in sheer ebullition of spirits, is not necessarily joyous. It expresses emotion but differs from song in that it sometimes indicates extreme agitation rather than ecstasy. Parent birds in distress for

their young which an intruder has approached too closely drum incessantly as they sweep to and fro overhead, and one has heard a female snipe varying the little plaintive call which she makes at such a time with alarmed and hurried vibrations of her stringed instrument while dipping along upon wavering, troubled wings. The note is always given when in descent, the length of the roll corresponding with that of the sudden plunge through air, so characteristic of the bird's flight at this season.

The male is the principal musician, the female displaying her ability mainly when sounding the note of distress. She is the *vocalist*, however, or rather, perhaps, she is the more 'talkative' of the two. Curiously enough, apart from the famous alarm note with which every sportsman is familiar, the species is usually considered to be silent in the main. Even standard books of reference seldom mention any other cry, yet the voice of the snipe is a common sound upon the summer moorland. When under the impression that she is in sole possession of her lonely haunt, the bird frequently utters a harsh note not unlike the croak of a frog as she hunts assiduously among the moist roots. With the chicks about her, or when summoning them for any special purpose, she clucks after the manner of a barn-door fowl—a liquid chuckling call, far-sounding in the silence of the marshes, but like the monotonous 'craque' of the landrail, exceedingly baffling and difficult to locate. Indeed, like the latter bird's call, it might almost be regarded as ventriloquial. The proximity of a snipe family may frequently be discovered by this means, particularly in country such as high Dartmoor where wild cries are most noticeable in the immense silence, and upon such occasions if one watches for a while, an attractive little scene may be witnessed.

Around upon every side stretches the moorland, its barren

undulations broken by outcrops of hoary, tumbled granite in and out of which the wheatears dart or hold lively intercourse with their neighbours, the stonechats. High overhead sounds the raven's croak, and from somewhere in the little marshy hollow, liquid and insistent, comes now and again the cluck or chuckle as the mother snipe discovers something edible, or calls a laggard to her side. Then suddenly through the stillness there quivers another sound, the tuneful thrumming of tense quills trembling under the stroke of the wind's fingers, and the soft monotone of the mother bird changes in the instant to a shrill delighted chatter, as, buoyant and almost ethereal as a wisp of bog-cotton, her mate drifts down, and alighting upon the nearest rock, remains there for a few moments, an elegant elfin shape, like a pixy householder benevolently regarding his domestic circle.

He receives a charming welcome, repeated as he leaves his perch and joins the little group paddling about the moss-hags or freshets. And this note, it would seem, if not entirely peculiar to the hen bird, is mainly reserved for converse with her mate or for strictly confidential discussions. One may hear very similar dialogues at times between sandpipers under much the same circumstances, and the note being not altogether unlike the shriller and more continuous chattering of oyster-catchers or redshanks, probably represents the language of most little waders when they have occasion to 'talk.'

The conversational efforts of the female snipe do not end with welcoming her mate's return, however. She sometimes vociferates in the most excited manner when both birds are upon the wing to the accompaniment of the male's drumming, the effect upon such occasions being curious. She has also a shrill quacking note which she utters when,

as frequently happens, she flies to seek her husband or join him for a short while upon his aerial gyrations. This does not always sound so amicable, however. There is at times a distinct hint of the querulous about it, and rather suggests altercation, probably protest at his absenting himself too long from family duties. Her complaint, if such it is, may not be without justification, for the male bird, in true masculine fashion, appears to leave nursery affairs in hands which he doubtless considers more competent than his own, and while the mother is clucking to the chicks he may often be heard in the distance, playing upon his 'drum,' obviously enjoying himself immensely, and it sometimes appears as though this shirking of responsibility becomes irritating to his harassed wife, who sallies forth to interview him in the manner described.

The chicks for the most part are silent, although occasionally their minute pipings can be distinguished when the little family is grouped about the mother, unconscious of observation. Their main concern is to attract as little notice as possible, complete effacement in anything approaching emergency being the rule of their young lives. At the approach of danger both parents take wing and drum overhead for a while, after which, if the enemy fails to depart, the mother bird soon drops to ground not far away at some point from which she can watch proceedings. As her agitation increases she approaches nearer and nearer by short circuitous flights, until taking cover, she is lost to sight, and although unaware of her precise whereabouts, one realises that she is near, the knowledge that her bright distressful eyes are watching every movement having a disturbing effect upon the observer's conscience. She does not display the fearlessness of the sandpiper which in such a case wheels around or, perching in full view upon a near

hummock, whistles a tuneful plaint. The snipe's courage is no less than that of her neighbour, however, for she has greater cause to fear a human being, the monster whose proximity too often means death to her race, and under the circumstances the silent protest of so shy and persecuted a bird is the more affecting.

So anxious is she for the safety of her young that she returns to search for them long before the intruder is out of sight, running over the heath and clucking anxiously as she approaches. The chicks, of course, have not gone far, merely trickling into the herbage which, however short, absorbs their tiny nondescript coloured bodies as though they had been rain-drops. When suddenly intruding upon a snipe family it is sometimes difficult to believe that the little ones have not taken invisible wing, or indeed, were ever there, so impossible does it seem for them to have found such complete shelter upon the sparse moorland turf. One moment they are in evidence, piping in subdued tones or contentedly pecking about. Then, as one's advance under cover of boulders or ling can no longer be disguised, the parents resort to clamorous flight and in the same second the spot where the family has been becomes to all appearance as destitute of life as though the grass had never bent beneath any weight more perceptible than that of a dragon-fly. Over it the bog-cotton waves, the clouds cast their reflections, but the tiny chicks have melted into the friendly heath which so kindly lends its colours, like a screen, to shield the young life which through the long course of the centuries it has produced and fostered.

Keen must be the human vision which can detect a hiding snipe chick unless by chance a point of sunlight scintillates upon an anxiously watching eye twinkling like a dew-drop deep in the bronze of the herbage. Upon one such occasion,

when standing still with no suspicion that such interesting neighbours were near, I saw my retriever make a scratching movement with one paw and imagined that he was trying to unearth a mouse. A moment later, using his claws like a rake, he brought a downy chick to light, and while I examined the little oddity to make sure that he had not been harmed, the dog, employing precisely similar tactics a few feet away, produced a second. Very quaint they were, balls of fluff about the size of Spanish chestnut shells, supported on legs as slender as harebell stalks which looked comically long as they straddled off, making no further attempt to hide when once discovered.

Apart from the natural gift of concealment and its peculiar erratic flight, the snipe employs no wiles. An ingenuous little bird, he would be most confiding had not ill fortune singled him out as a favourite mark for the sportsman, and in lands where hard experience has not taught him to shun human proximity, he permits the near approach of man as fearlessly as a ringed plover or sanderling upon the beach. Even the brooding bird makes little attempt to conceal the whereabouts of her nest. She never runs from her post like the curlew and lapwing, but remains until the thunderous vibrations of an approaching footfall become too terrifying, when she arises with a twittering plea for the treasures which she is no longer able to guard. That so fairy-like a bird should lay a clutch more beautiful than that of any kindred species seems only appropriate, nor is the unusual size of the egg remarkable when one remembers that room must be found within the olive-tinted, chestnut-splashed shell, not only for the nestling's stilt-like legs, but for the bill which even in the callow stage is comparatively long.

The position of the nest is very similar to that of a meadow-pipit, being made upon firm ground, preferably under a tuft

of heather, and usually but not invariably encircled by swamp in which the youngsters may paddle as soon as they embark upon life. In England there appears to be no limit as to elevation, and birds reared upon the uplands adhere to their breeding-places until the sealing up of the springs by frost compels them to seek less rigorous conditions.

How long the family remains united is an interesting question. In early winter it is customary to come upon little companies—or ‘wisps,’ if one prefers to use the technical expression—frequenting the same spot regularly, and these parties, whether composed of relatives or casual acquaintances who have joined forces, remain intact as long as the individual survive. Since a covey of partridges usually consists of the brood and parents, there is no reason why the same rule should not apply to snipe, and circumstances seem to suggest that such is the case.

However that may be, at times a wisp of snipe displays almost the same unanimity as a covey under similar circumstances. Occasionally a little group of five or six will fly in such compact form that one might almost expect to see their long ‘noses’ collide, and even when they take wing singly, they choose a common direction, as though impelled by the community mind. Although certainly not gregarious in the literal sense, the common snipe, like the majority of birds, is far from being solitary by disposition. When found alone, one may assume that it has either lost or become separated from its companions. One never sees a flock upon the wing, however, and when considerable numbers are flushed from a common feeding-ground, they usually rise either singly or in ‘wisps,’ and are not necessarily scared into general flight, even though volleys of shots, fired at early starters, echo over the marsh.

‘Wisp’ is an apt term which, like a ‘murmuration’ of

starlings or 'pride' of lions, conveys a definite impression of the creatures to which it refers. As the buoyant little birds erupt from the heath one might almost imagine that they had been set in motion by a puff of wind. One is inclined to wonder sometimes whether the erratic turnings and twistings so inseparable from a snipe's flight and usually attributed to the instinct of self-preservation, are not actually due to the combined speed and lightness of the bird, which factors might conceivably produce sudden involuntary digressions akin to the swerve of a ball in a high wind. The turn could easily be effected by an unintentional and scarcely perceptible tilt of a winnowing wing, particularly as the snipe has cultivated the habit of surrendering itself to the vagaries of the air-currents, the spasmodic whims of which must be obvious to anyone who has watched wind-whirled leaves or feathers upon their uncertain course, or noted the fantastic shapes of the piled snow-drift carved by the same irresponsible agency.

At all times when upon the wing a snipe is a natural trickster, a notable exponent of 'freak' evolution. He specialises in the unexpected, and the extent to which he carries this disposition may prove disconcerting to anyone unfamiliar with his eccentricities. An inexperienced sportsman who has vainly discharged both barrels after the streak of brown lightning as it zig-zagged from the bog is not infrequently surprised to see the minute disappearing form suddenly collapse in air and dive earthwards with folded wings as though death, deferred for a few seconds, had cut short its swift flight. Flattering himself with the belief that his shot has not been wasted after all, he hurries to the place, only to see the unharmed bird again dart into air with a whimsical chirrup which, to his disappointed ears, acquires a derisive note as once again the gun is emptied in the

elusive fugitive's wake. By no stretch of the imagination could a 'mock' fall of this description be regarded as guile. It serves no strategic purpose—rather the contrary, since obviously encouraging pursuit. It is merely one of many aeronautic frolics in which the bird's volatile nature induces him to indulge. Like the ghost of Gawain 'blown down a wandering wind,' his course through air is 'all delight.' As a puppy or a young lamb gambols as it runs, so this feather-weight aeronaut, quaint both in appearance and character, frolics as he flies, untroubled by any terrifying reflections upon the possible fate which, missing his slight body, has left his even lighter spirit equally unscathed.

He is essentially a creature of the elements, and even as the storm petrel accompanies the tempest, so the movements of snipe are governed largely by weather. Frost and drought constitute the forces before which he retires, the abundance or scarcity of the species over considerable areas varying according to the season. The greater number of the birds encountered during winter are visitors from colder lands, and one cannot but wonder at the skill with which new arrivals recognise the approved halting-places of their race. Not the least remarkable feature of migration is the schedule-like procedure of all participants in the movement.

As usual in matters where the mystery of animal life is concerned, one takes it for granted not only that migrating birds should observe a fixed itinerary, but that their distribution should be effected upon the same automatic lines. It is clear that under normal conditions each suitable, or rather, perhaps, each *accepted* district receives its annual quota of 'winter-campers.' There is, however, nothing to indicate the means by which the assortment takes place—whether it is merely a matter of securing a pitch by chance selection, or each contingent of birds proceeding to the

prescribed district in which its ancestors have wintered for countless generations.

Not the least interesting point in this respect is the question of desirability. Outstanding in this as in everything else, the snipe possesses definite ideas. Certain spots appear to offer peculiar attractions, indistinguishable to human senses, and to such places the birds return day after day, although often courting destruction by such conservatism. Surrounded by miles of marshland any part of which may seem equally suitable, there is usually some spring or hollow the particular advantages of which are recognised by residents or migrants alike, and whether these spots lie amidst desolate moorland or within a stone's throw of farm buildings seems to be entirely immaterial. The snipe consider them desirable, and although there may be numerous places where they might feed in perfect security within easy distance, they either consider the attractions worth the price or are incapable of breaking away from immemorial custom. Possibly upon account of his complete inoffensiveness the bird has acquired no guile even in the matter of self-defence. In any case, however, his outlook upon life appears to be fatalistic.

From first to last whimsical, mysterious, interesting and eminently attractive in life, pathetically minute when brought to the table, the snipe has a special appeal to human consideration, human sympathy. It is probable that in future years he will be granted the privileges of the skylark—once considered fair game for the gun, now regarded merely as an ornament to the countryside, an 'emblem of happiness.' Meanwhile he drums in the spring, taking the world as he finds it, for all birds are philosophers.

THE GIRL IN THE BLUE JERSEY.

BY DOROTHY DUDLEY SHORT.

MR. John Dawkins lived at Slough. He thought Slough a very fine place. It had broad streets, several super-cinemas and super-bars and good shops. What more could anyone want? Mr. Dawkins didn't hold with new-fangled ideas, but he liked modern improvements in lighting and comfort, and he always said the present day was better than the times of his youth: which showed, of course, that he was not really getting old. He was, as he had always been, progressive. His shop, however, had not progressed very much. It stood exactly where it had always stood, at the corner of one of the side roads, so that one window faced the main street. That made it better than the shops farther up the side road, and though there had been some anxious times it had never been closed, for all the appearance of Baker, Baker, Jones, & Sons with their grocery department and cut prices. It continued to make a small profit, and 'What more could anyone want?' said Mr. Dawkins. So long as he and his wife could live, and Harold could have a good education he was quite content. Harold was his only son. Mr. Dawkins didn't approve of large families. It wasn't right, he often said, to bring hordes of children into the world for other people to keep. It was because of that that there wasn't stuff to go round. Mr. Dawkins was quite sound economically. So Harold, being apparently the alternative to a horde, was enough. What would happen to England if the millions of people in the

same position as himself only produced one son didn't occur to Mr. Dawkins : sound economics aren't concerned with the future.

The same people came into the shop, day after day, week after week, year after year, and many of them had known Dawkins, Senior. It was pleasant to comment regularly on the weather to these people, and to do them small favours—Mr. Dawkins liked doing small favours ; it reminded him that, despite various appearances to the contrary, England is a Christian country and that every Sunday morning he went to the Three-times-Reformed Methodless Chapel. What Harold meant when he said of these regular customers : ' But, after all, Father, they're not immortal,' Mr. Dawkins couldn't imagine. But it was no use worrying about what Harold meant. There was in any case something very strange about Harold. He began by saying queer things, and then he got worse—*much* worse.

' There must be something in this 'ere 'eredit,' said Mr. Dawkins, ' for I'm sure the ejicatun's been all right.'

Looking up he saw the cold eye of Mrs. Dawkins fixed upon him.

' John,' she said, ' do you know what 'eredit means ? It means that one of us is like 'Arold.'

Mr. Dawkins stared.

' Then what *can* it be ? ' he asked.

Mrs. Dawkins was a dear creature, but she could be severe at times. Fortunately in the main she had the same ideas as her husband. She liked Slough, she liked the shop, above all she liked the rooms above, the tea-cups, the window-curtains and the large fern that was pushed up close to them. She might have wished for a daughter, but there it was : Mr. Dawkins had said a son was best, because he could help to carry on the business, and he probably knew. The fact

that Harold didn't help to carry on the business : that indeed he didn't help to carry on anything whatever, was, however, the topic of the moment.

'You don't know what goes on in these schools,' Mrs. Dawkins said. 'They teachers——'

She rambled on, giving faintly unfavourable impressions of a Miss Rose who had come to see her just after Harold won his scholarship at the County High School.

But Mr. Dawkins wasn't impressed.

'Tain't that,' he said, 'it's 'ereditry, that's what it is. Blunt's boy's all right, and 'e got a scholarship just the same time as 'Arold. Been at the County five years, and now he's helping old Blunt, and they're going to put up Blunt and Son.'

Mrs. Dawkins' mouth—always a straight slit below her nose—shortened perceptibly.

'Do you suggest, Mr. Dawkins, that there's anyone in my family goes on like 'Arold, for I'm sure there's no one in yours.'

'Well, no, not exactly, dear,' coaxed Mr. Dawkins, 'not now, as it were, but 'oo knows? Everyone's born from someone, and your mother's grandmother, now, 'oo was she?'

A faint flush suddenly pervaded Mrs. Dawkins' small middle-ageing face. She remembered her grandmother down at the shoemaker's, and her father's mother who had been in service, but what about *her* mother again? Some half-forgotten whispering gossip stole into her mind. A love child—yes, that's what she was—a love child. And the father? Well, best not think—nothing in the world was so tiresome as thinking. Better go to Woolworth's! She put down her knitting—got coat and hat and went out into the comforting streets of Slough.

Comforting indeed they were—broad and secure—not narrow and falling to pieces like those of a little village once seen on a holiday—but strong and prosperous, suggestive of the means to live and cheap amusements superimposed. Nothing lacking ; what more could anyone want ?

Harold was standing at the cross-roads watching the traffic and the lines that made patterns as the cars passed and rounded the corner by the super-cinema, and the colours that complemented or defied one another. His finger itched for the tool. How he loved the feel of brush or pencil in the hand, the swirl of it as it swept and coiled about the paper ! Curves and twists seemed to come from nowhere—often the thing went by itself—and the pattern only revealed itself later. Yet it was driven by something that Harold knew belonged to himself far more surely than if he had thought out his drawing carefully beforehand. And then a girl in a blue jumper crossed the road. That was absolute—that was perfect ! He could not wait. The brush ! He turned and ran, nearly falling over his mother, who had at that precise moment reached the corner.

‘ ‘Arold ! ’ she called after him, but he did not hear.

Alone in his top bedroom, he seized a white block—water colour, yes water colour ! The colours should run into one another and give the feeling of Slough—its confusion, its commercial crudity, its eagerness, its accomplishment, its hurry, the gay girl, whose youth reflected the energy, but whose beauty was so far above the futility ; and through everything the March sunlight, mocking—yet purifying.

The passionate brush flowed over the white paper, lines and masses crossing, harmonising, conflicting with one another. Speed was the thing—the speed of Slough and of the West Road. A brilliant top of a red bus, now a green coach half across it—wheels everywhere and nowhere

—the policeman's huge hand (not, of course, the policeman himself—he didn't matter), dogs as little streaks, always in the way. Advertisements capitals, many-hued, falling about, and then the girl in the blue jersey ; a brilliant wash, clean, strong, right in the middle of the picture—her youth—her energy—and through and across everything, the rays of sunlight, mocking, yet making gay and worthwhile.

Finished ! Harold put the drawing up and stared at it. He hadn't paused for an instant, but now he looked at it steadily and for a long time—far longer than he had taken to produce it. He added one or two vivid touches and then set it on the mantelpiece.

'It's good,' he said, 'it's the best I've done.'

He washed the brushes, smoothed his ruffled hair and then went to his cupboard and took some drawings out of a portfolio. He looked carefully at them—glancing from time to time at the new one. There was the grey-toned impression of the Great West Road in rain, the rather cruel one of the famous view from Richmond Hill and the somewhat more orthodox drawing of his own shop from the other side of the road, with his father's spectacles across the whole front, because he always thought of him in this way when he was going in. These and some others he packed carefully and then crept downstairs, after glancing just once more at the 'Girl in the Blue Jersey ;' stole his father's car and went to London.

For there he had an artist friend, and the artist had a critic friend, of modern tastes.

Despite a visit to the local Woolworth, Mrs. Dawkins returned a little ruffled from her shopping expedition. True she had temporarily forgotten her annoyance while enjoying that most exhilarating experience, hard indeed for

the lowest spirits to withstand. Nevertheless she recollected that extraordinary encounter with her son when she reached the spot where it had occurred. How differently indeed she saw that corner from the maze of lines and patterns that it was to Harold ! To her it was a place of broad shop-fronts, some well kept—others less so ; some on the upgrade, others declining ; and people consisted of those she knew, at least by sight, and strangers.

Inside she sought Mr. Dawkins, but he was nowhere to be seen. The shop was empty, the room behind it was empty. Some elemental, perhaps specially female, instinct persuaded her that something was not quite as usual at Dawkins & Son, Grocers. The same kind of underlying urge that guided the fantastic pencil in the case of Harold now led the feet of Mrs. Dawkins up the narrow stairway to the small top room. And there sure enough was Mr. Dawkins standing sheepishly among the paints and brushes. His spectacles were awry, his limp arms hung loosely by his side as he faced the opening door. Mrs. Dawkins had a vague feeling that she had once seen her husband look like that before, soon after they were married, but the occasion was forgotten and it had certainly not been repeated. Reflection being a detestable occupation, Mrs. Dawkins spoke instantly :

‘What are you doing ?’ she asked. Her tone was suspicious.

‘It’s awful !’ said Mr. Dawkins, ‘there’s Mrs. Brookes gone over the other side and come back with her basket full ; and then a stranger come in, ask for butter and said he’d go to Baker, Baker.—Things aren’t right. And I can’t ’elp thinkin’ it ’as something to do with ’Arold.’

Mrs. Dawkins’ mouth slitted more than ever.

‘That doesn’t explain what you’re doin’ up ’ere,’ she said.

And neither did it. But this was in fact what had happened.

Mr. Dawkins, examining his ledger, had found that profits were steadily decreasing, declining for the first time in all the years he had had the shop. He had compared this week with last week, and both weeks with the fortnight before. The last six months showed the barest margin of profit and were not to be compared with the corresponding period of last year. And then, looking out, he had seen Mrs. Brookes cross the road and go to that new-fangled chap opposite, who put numbers in his window in connection with some kind of queer competition. Free stuff! Downright dishonest, Mr. Dawkins called it. And Mrs. Brookes, too, who had known his father, before they had had the proud title of Dawkins & Son! Certainly she had looked sheepish enough as she had crept home on the far side of the road, but what consolation was that? And then, as if that wasn't bad enough, a new customer, who had inquired the price of butter! Naming it, Mr. Dawkins had rubbed his hands pleasantly together and leaned across the counter gazing amiably over his spectacles at his new friend. But the new friend had made him jump so that the said spectacles had fallen off altogether and rattled down among the biscuit tins.

'Robbery, sir!' he cried, 'nothing but robbery! You ought to be in prison—I shall go to Baker & Baker!'

And in a trice he was out of the shop. Then Mr. Dawkins fell to thinking, almost as difficult and unusual an occupation with him, as it was for his wife.

What was the matter with everything—and above all what was the matter with Harold? Why didn't he pull his weight, Harold, who had had a good education so that he could take up a profession and become a gentleman? If he wasn't going to be a gentleman; why on earth didn't he help in the shop? Instead, he did neither. He just hung

about scribbling, saying every day that he had heard of a job, commercial advertising or something of that sort, and then coming back and saying that he hadn't got it after all. And why hadn't he? Because he wouldn't draw things right. He could, but he wouldn't. If he would paint a pretty girl, for instance, just getting out of her bath, holding a nice cake of soap, or something like that! But he drew things all wrong; without any shape at all, and *of course* no one wanted them. And now if he hadn't taken the shop car and gone off to London, and very likely he wouldn't be back all night.

Wrath rising, Mr. Dawkins had sought the upper room. On the mantelpiece stood the picture of the girl in the blue jersey. Mr. Dawkins went close and peered at it. He looked at it with his spectacles, and without his spectacles. 'And what should that advertise, I should like to know?' he muttered. 'Where's the rest of the policeman? And why has the girl no feet and what's this car showing through the bus, and all them silly little specks?'

And then, suddenly, something happened. A hand tore the picture from the mantelpiece. The inward urge of Mr. Dawkins overwhelming him, he cast the gay painting on the floor, stamped on it, tore at it, tore and stamped, stamped and tore till there was nothing left but little bits of paper and little bits of cardboard, tiny fragments of bright colour littering the floor. And then suddenly overcome by shame, Dawkins stooped, and, tidy even at such moments, collected every portion, until he had put the last fragment in the waste-paper basket.

'Don't matter,' he muttered guiltily, 'it wasn't nothing—nothing at all!'

And so, turning, he met the small shrewd eyes of Mrs. Dawkins, and remembered, as she had done, that there had

once been an occasion of this kind before, only he was more certain that that occasion had not been a pleasant one. Because he could not entertain that memory, or answer those shrewd eyes, and also perhaps because confession is good for the soul, the story was soon told and the soothing, acquiescent words awaited, 'Well, John, it wasn't nothing.'

But Mrs. Dawkins didn't say them. She didn't play her part. Strange to say, she thought it *was* something; very much so!

'You didn't ought,' she said, 'to take the boy's things, and tear them up. They belong to 'im after all. 'E did them. If they're to be torn up, 'Arold should do it 'isself. It may be a picture all the time, for what you know.'

'Well, but look, dear!' said Mr. Dawkins coaxingly, 'look 'ow it went!'

He made strange futile gestures in the air.

'That 'uge 'and!'

''Uge 'and?' said Mrs. Dawkins severely. 'What on earth are you talking about, John?'

'I'll show you,' said Mr. Dawkins.

Seizing a block that lay on Harold's table, he put it before him on the easel. Then he filled one of the brushes with red paint from the palette and made a great slash across the page.

'There you are, that's a bus!' he cried.

'And 'ere's another!'

A splash of green followed, pouring from the opposite side till it merged into the red, making a nondescript blur lower down.

'That's a car perhaps!' he added with vigorous irony.

'And 'ere,' continued Mr. Dawkins, filling a third brush in his excitement, ''ere are some dogs!' Little lines and dots peppered the paper below.

'And this, of course, is advertisin'.'

Mrs. Dawkins' astonished eyes beheld giant capitals in reds and yellows falling about anywhere over the page.

'And now for the 'and ! Oh ! yes, the 'and.'

Enormous flesh-coloured fingers, shapeless and wide-apart, appeared in the middle of the picture.

'No body 'e 'as. Oh ! of course, no body !'

Mr. Dawkins' English was suffering severely under the strain of his new rôle as painter.

'And nah,' he declared in stridently ironic tones, 'nah for the lady—yes nah for what he's pleased to call a girl.'

The brilliant blue jersey was indicated somehow, the brown skirt, the red blob for a face.

'And, of course, no legs ! Oh ! no, legs don't matter. As if anyone ever walked without 'em !'

'Well, there you are—there's the picture !' gasped Mr. Dawkins finally, both himself and the brushes exhausted. 'Naa, what abaat it ?'

'Put it on the mantelpiece, Mr. Dawkins,' said his wife in level tones. 'Perhaps when 'Arold comes 'ome 'e'll think it's 'is.'

'Don't care if he do,' answered Mr. Dawkins recklessly, 'and anyway it's no worse. Perhaps he'll think again when he sees anyone can do that rubbish.'

'We'll see when 'e comes 'ome,' said Mrs. Dawkins darkly.

But Harold didn't come home. He didn't come home that night, nor all the next day, and Mr. Dawkins began to feel more and more uneasy when the first lights appeared in the streets. And then the shop door opened, and not Harold, but a stout stranger came in.

He spoke with an American accent and had the genial friendliness of the race.

‘No thanks!’ he said in answer to the grocer’s polite enquiry, now couched in his best English.

‘I’ve an unusual mission to make and maybe you can help me out. I’ve come for a picture.’

Mr. Dawkins stared.

‘You’ve an artist son,’ went on the American, ‘and they tell me he’s got a fine thing upstairs, a noo work, the “Girl in the Blue Jersey” they say he calls it. Here, see this!’

He handed a note in Harold’s writing.

‘Please give bearer my new picture. It’s on the mantel-piece. He will pay for it. I shall be back to-morrow. HAROLD.’

Mr. Dawkins wanted to make some kind of explanation, but the words would not come. Instead he stuttered something about ‘upstairs, top room.’

‘Oh, that’s O.K., sure! No trouble. Just lead the way, Mr. Dawkins! I’m used to stairs. Now, I’ve been—’

The protesting grocer found he was being hustled up the darkening stairway, the hefty American, cigar in mouth, close at his heels, talking all the time.

‘I’ve got to have a show. Bought some good little pieces in Paris . . . Just want something to complete. I asked them in London to put me on to one of your younger men. . . . Yeah, I know, not famous yet, but will be, they tell me.’

Inside the room the American spotted the work at once. He spread out a protesting hand. ‘Don’t bother with the lights. I can see!’

He drew nearer and regarded the painting through puffs of smoke from his huge cigar. Then he slapped Mr. Dawkins on the back and laughed heartily.

‘Swell!’ he cried. ‘Just what I wanted! Something a

bit extreme. Latest style in British art. Now what'll you take for it? Thirty pounds I think they named in town.'

He drew a small book from his pocket and consulted it.

'But, but,' gasped Mr. Dawkins, 'I really don't know. I—I . . .'

'Well, say here, I'm no crook, what about forty, then?'

'But, sir,' protested the unfortunate grocer, 'the boy's not here. I really don't know if he would——'

'Well, look, mister, I *want* the thing. Name your price and we'll settle right now!'

'It's—it's—well, the fact is I don't know if the boy would want to sell it, if he—if he saw it again—not that——'

'Is that so? Well, then, we won't quarrel. Make it fifty guineas. Two hundred and fifty dollars! That's fair enough! And it's my last word.'

The American took out a cheque-book and a pen.

'Get a move on, pal, I've got to get to Noo York.'

'Going to New York, *now*? ' queried Mr. Dawkins, his gaze steadying for the first time.

'Right now!' said the American. 'I won't be seeing your son. Wish him the best from me, and tell him this'll hang in America and show the world that England's coming along all right.'

With an 'O.K. So Long!' the cheque was thrust into Mr. Dawkins' still hesitating hand, the picture seized unwrapped, and before Mr. Dawkins' brain had fully cleared, the car was roaring away down the Great West Road.

'Well, did you sell it, Father?' cried Harold as he dashed into the shop next day.

Without a word Mr. Dawkins withdrew the cheque from his pocket.

Harold seized it.

'Father, well done ! How too, too marvellous ! What a head you've got ! I knew I could trust you when it came to business !'

Harold went on to say that artists ought to appreciate business men—that it would be much better if they did, that he was sorry he had not done so before, and that he would do so in future—in fact, he had never spoken so nicely or indeed at such length to his father before.

'And look here, Dad ! This is even better than the cheque.'

He handed a cutting from an evening paper. It proclaimed that the 'Girl in the Blue Jersey,' a new work by the well-known member of the group of left-wing British Artists, Mr. Harold Dawkins, had been bought by the American Millionaire and Art Patron, Mr. Cyrus O. Boshier, to represent the latest phases of British Art in his forthcoming show in New York.

'I'm made, Dad !' laughed Harold, 'and I hope I'll be able to make you, too !'

'You didn't ought to 'ave done it, Mr. Dawkins,' said Mrs. Dawkins in answer to ominous creakings of the bed that night, 'and if you 'ad 'ave done it, you didn't ought to laugh.'

But Mr. Dawkins did laugh all the same. He laughed on and off at strange unaccountable moments for the rest of his unexpectedly prosperous life.

ALEXANDER I's VISIT—JUNE 1814:

JOURNAL OF LADY MARY LONG.

LADY MARY LONG was the eldest daughter of the seventh Earl of Northesk. Born in October 1779, she married in 1810 Mr. Walter Long of Preshaw, Hants, and Muchelney, Somerset. He is constantly referred to in this Diary as 'Mr. Long,' according to the custom in those days, although they had then been married over four years.

Lord Northesk, who was a Rear-Admiral of England and Admiral of the Red, took a prominent part in the quelling of the 'Nore Mutiny' in 1797, and was subsequently third in command (in the 'Britannia') at Trafalgar. He was a nephew by marriage of Lord St. Vincent.

It was no doubt owing to the friendship of Northesk with the Regent that there is no mention, in this account of the visit of the Allied Sovereigns, to the hissing of the Prince which took place on his public appearances, and which is referred to with such emphasis by Lady Charlotte Bury and other diarists. Lady Mary appears to belittle the Princess of Wales, who in reality held the affection of the mob at this time, and there is nothing to show, in her description, that all the cheering and rejoicings at this time were solely intended for the visiting Tsar and the ever-popular Blücher.

Even if biased, however, this short Diary is the simple and vivid account by a young Society woman of a stirring contemporary event, and, as such, is of certain historical interest.

G. M. BARNES.

JUNE 1814.

On Friday the 3rd of June we took a sudden resolution of going up to Town to see the entry of the Emperor of Russia¹ which was generally supposed would have been a public one. We accordingly set off on Sunday morning early and reached London by five, and were fortunate enough to get good rooms at Harman's Hotel.

Monday. Mr. Long went to King St., Portman Square, to see the Wetman's Platow : three horses, a chestnut, a grey, and a white one marked with an 'O,' which had carried him fifteen years : he gave him to the Regent. There were eight Cossacks there who lived all together in one room, and would not allow any person to disturb them, one of them with a long beard came into the stable whilst Mr. Long was there : he had long blue trousers, a leathern belt round his waist, in which he carried his pistol. They throw pails of water over their horses every morning and then scratch them down with their hands. I went to see Hogarth's paintings at the British Gallery, which far exceeded my expectations, and then the balloon and car at the Pantheon, which together cost a thousand pounds.

Tuesday. Mr. Long went in the carriage to take his station opposite Whitehall in order to see the entrance of the Emperor. At once, Lady Clanricarde sent for me, she had an order to admit her party into Whitehall Chapel, but when we arrived there we found every window either full, or else occupied by some *Dragons* who were keeping them for people who were expected. After scrambling over the pews and tumbling over the rafters (for the Chapel was repairing for the Concerts) I was completely tired, and seeing no chance of my party placing themselves to their

¹ *Alexander I.*

satisfaction I left them, and squeezed myself into the corner of a window at the top of the Chapel, which would not open. In the meantime Mama and my sisters got into our carriage which was immediately opposite and much I wished to be with them. But after I had sat there sometime, to the vast annoyance of some Scotchwomen, Lady Clanricarde sent to inform me that she had the offer of a window, provided we would each pay ten shillings, which we accordingly did, and were very agreeably situated with the French Eagles which were there deposited. The party shut up in this little room were, the Duchess of Sussex, Princess Augusta, Lady Dunmore and one of her grandchildren, Lady Clanricarde and daughter, myself, Lord Archibald Hamilton, and Col. Christie.

The Duchess of Sussex made Lord A. H.'s apologies for a speech he had made when I was walking about in the Chapel by myself.

The Emperor of Russia and King of Prussia ¹ arrived incog. in a very shabby travelling carriage : a curious-looking man with a beard sat on the box. We were told he was the Emperor's coachman and that he constantly goes about with him. The crowds of people and carriages were so great, that their carriage was stopped some time, people supposing them to be some of the attendants.

The guns were soon after fired, and we were assured on good authority that they were arrived, but we were not willing to believe it and staid some time longer. When we got into the carriage Col. Christie made us all get out again in a great hurry, as there was a report that the Emperor was coming. We tumbled upstairs, knocked some of the workmen down, and got to our windows again, when we saw another plain looking carriage arrive. We began to be

¹ *Frederick William III.*

very hungry, and were fortunate enough to get some porter and biscuits. .

About six, Mr. Thos. Ferrers came under the windows and told me that Mama and Mr. Long were going home. I went down to him, walked to Parliament St. where we crossed over and joined them. I never saw anything like the number of carriages and people, every house in London was almost empty, numbers went without any dinner that their servants might see this famous sight.

Papa had got Mr. Coutts' box at the Opera, so as soon as we had eat something, we went there. Madame Fernando was the principal actress and performed very well.

The Princess of Wales came in, and evidently wished to attract notice, but without effect.

Wednesday morning we drove into Piccadilly where we soon saw the Emperor going to visit the Regent. He was dressed in scarlet with very large epaulets. He is very fair and rather bald, his eyes are small but have a very arch expression: he looks remarkably healthy. We saw Blücher drawn up Bond St., he seemed to enjoy it very much.

We afterwards saw the Emperor and the Duchess of Oldenburgh ¹ going in state in a glass carriage drawn by cream-coloured horses and preceded by a party of the Queen's Bays. He bowed constantly as he passed. The Duchess is a pretty looking woman, very fair and rather thick lips. In the evening I drank tea with Mrs. Milner; Mama sent her carriage for me and as soon as I got out the axle tree broke.

Thursday. I saw the Emperor in St. James's St., going to Cumberland House. He was accompanied by a party

¹ Sister of the Tsar.

of the Queen's Bays and his carriage was drawn by beautiful black horses.

That night Anne, Papa, Mr. Long and myself went into the Pit at the Opera, in the hopes of seeing some of the great people. The Opera was remarkably good, being Tramezzani's benefit, and Grassini sang delightfully and looked very handsome : her ' God save the King ' is very inferior to Catalani's : it was sung with great applause when Blücher came. He handed the Duchess of York into her box. The audience were so much delighted at seeing him that the Opera was stopped for sometime. He wore the diamond medallion given him by the Regent round his neck with a blue ribbon.

The Prince of Orange¹ and Prince —, General D'Yorck, Sir Charles Stewart, Lord Burghersh and numbers of foreigners were in the house : most of them had the order of Alexander Newski.² The performance was several times interrupted from the general idea that the Emperor was coming.

Blücher was clapped repeatedly and obliged to come forward and bow. He was very much amused at some young ladies in the next box looking at him. He has a trick of always netting his fingers and stroking his whiskers which I do not much admire. Being the first night of the illuminations we thought our horses might be frightened by the squibs and crackers and therefore returned in a hackney coach, which broke down in Swallow St. We were sometime before we could make the man stop, for he went on very quietly dragging the coach over the ground in spite of our earnest endeavours to prevent. We walked

¹ Afterwards William II of Holland. Suitor for the Princess Charlotte.

² Russian Grand Duke of thirteenth century, and a Saint of the Church. The Order was founded by Peter the Great.

home through Cavendish St. in order to see the illumination in front of the French ambassador's house which was remarkably pretty.

Friday we went to the Exhibition which I thought a bad one : most of the rooms were darkened for the illuminations, so that we could not see the miniatures. From there we proceeded to the Panorama of Vittoria, which was so crowded it was almost impossible to see it : and I almost fought a battle with a woman there, who stuck her elbows into my sides till I was quite sore, and upon my remonstrating with her she threatened to call a *gentleman* to speak to me, upon which I told her she had better hold her tongue.

Mr. Long went to Matthew's benefit, which was very much crowded.

Saturday. I went to see the Indian jugglers and was much delighted with their clever tricks, the manner they catch the balls is wonderful. They have pleasant intelligent countenances : they were dressed in white calico jackets and trousers, with large earrings about 3 inches in diameter, and rings upon their feet. The seeing one of them swallow a sword 21 inches long, is not so disquieting as I expected. One of them, a lad of about fifteen sang a long, odd, monotonous but not unpleasant song, the whole time of their performance. They were brought over by an Indian Captain upon speculation.

In Pall Mall I saw the Emperor and Duchess of Oldenburg returning from the City in an open carriage. He was in a plain green coat and round hat. The Duchess had a very high bonnet and plume of feathers. We waited some time in Stable Yard in hopes of seeing the King of Prussia, who dined at two o'clock, but he drove off through the Park, by which means we missed him. We were to have met a party at Papa's before we went to the Opera,

but he told us that the doors would be opened much earlier than usual and that we had better go immediately. We accordingly got a mouthful and set off at $\frac{1}{2}$ past five and waited till the doors opened at $\frac{1}{4}$ past six. We then got out and went in with the rush. Mr. Long soon lost his hat, and my shawl was carried off, but we were fortunately not separated till I was driven up against an iron railing with one of my arms bent back and all the pressure of the people against me. I felt my breath almost gone several times, and that unless I made a desperate effort I must have been killed. Mr. Long in the meantime was carried on by the crowd thro' the doorway. He was so alarmed for me that he kept beseeching the people around me to save me. As soon as I could extricate my arm, which was with great difficulty, I got over the railing with the assistance of a gentleman behind me, and Mr. Long had scrambled over the pay box and received me on the other side. I then got into the turn of the bannisters on the stairs which kept off the crowd, and then climbed, or rather was dragged, over them, then over a poor woman who was thrown down. I had all my clothes torn to pieces and a violent bruise on my arm. Mr. Long had his hand cut open. The screams of the poor woman were dreadful, and I never think of it without being thankful that none of my sisters were with me, who would probably have been more frightened and consequently in greater danger. I thought hardly anything short of a miracle could have saved my life, and that I should never see my little girls any more. We had then got into the passage leading to the private boxes and Mr. Long hurried me on to the Pit (I was almost fainting with pain and fright), where we got an excellent seat close to the orchestra. I got my arm tied up and a little brandy to apply to it. I was such a miserable crazy figure that had I not

thought that people would be too much taken up by the great people to look at me, I should have been a good deal distressed, for as to getting out, that was quite impossible. I saw a gentleman attempt it, but he was obliged to return. However I got two or three good *stares* and no wonder, for I looked just come out of Bedlam.

There was a dreadful row : the people were clamourous for stage room, and broke into some of the boxes, one of which was the Duchess of Richmond's. I expected to have been killed. The Manager was called for, who made his appearance, but they did not know what to say to him when he came. Some did not like the Opera to go on till the great people arrived. Whenever Grassini sang she was mimicked, which she bore with great good humour. Nothing could pacify them till the Emperor, the King of Prussia, and the Regent arrived, which was about ten o'clock. The sight amply repaid us for all we had gone through. '*God save the King*' was sung by the *whole house*, and the applause was so great it was some time before the Opera could proceed.

The Emperor sat on the Regent's left hand and the King of Prussia on his right. They *did not bow* to the Princess of Wales, who was in her own box opposite with Lady Anne Smith and Lord Archibald Hamilton. I remarked the King of Prussia's sons, the Prince of Orange, Prince of Wirtemburgh, Duke and Duchess of York, Duke of Cambridge, Duke of Clarence, Prince ——, Blücher, Barclay de Tolli, General D'Yorck, Count Metternich, Duchess of Wellington, Sir Charles Stewart, Lord Burghersh, Lord Castlereagh,¹ and many foreigners whose names I did not know. The Hymn to the Emperor was beautiful. They stayed till the end of the Opera. We got away without

¹ *Foreign Secretary. Afterwards Marquess of Londonderry.*

any difficulty, but were obliged to walk home : and very cold it was. The next day, *Sunday*, I went nowhere except to church, and to pay a few visits ; I was afraid of the crowd in the Park which was very great, but my sisters got a famous view of them all on horseback.

Monday. We saw the Emperor and the Grand Duchess going to dine with the Regent at eight o'clock : they looked exceedingly merry.

Tuesday. We left Town about two o'clock, and having a new carriage the wheels heated so often we could get no further than Bagshot where we slept. That night was the most tremendous storm of thunder and lightning I ever remember. We got home next day, and recruited myself for the fatigues of *Portsmouth*, where we went on *Monday* the 20th.

Portsmouth. *June the 20th*. We were a large party, consisting of Papa, Mama, two sisters, two cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Cook, Mrs. Hulford, ourselves and my little girl Alice. Only five bedrooms to contain us all, women servants included, but we packed as well as we could and were a very jolly party. We went to see the rooms fitted up for Blücher, they were very neat but nothing particular. They were at the Bank immediately opposite our lodgings, commonly called the 'Dog and Kettle,' at the bottom of the High St. We had a very fine view from our windows of Spithead. After dinner we went on board the *Royal Sovereign* Yacht (Sir Edward Bury) and saw the bed in which Louis the 18th slept soundly during the passage from Dover to Calais,¹ which was two hours and a half. The Duchess D'Angouleme² was ill the whole time and had no female attendant. Dr. Outram was with her all the time.

¹ Louis went below and fell asleep directly he boarded the yacht, leaving the Duc de Bourbon to take his place on deck and acknowledge the farewells of the Regent.

² Daughter of Louis XVI.

Tuesday. We saw 35 led horses arrive. We went to the Government House which was preparing for the Regent : his pillows, bolster and mattress were of white satin. There were immense deal tables in two of the long rooms where the Regent dined, the tablecloth being never taken off. The lustres in these rooms were quite beautiful : all the rooms were newly papered and very damp. Mama and my sisters went to Commissioner Grey's, to see the preparations there for the Emperor, but very little was done to the house. The Emperor slept in a very small bed, and the Duchess of Oldenburgh carries her bedding about with her and sleeps upon a sofa. When the servants arrived they disarranged everything, flew into dreadful passions, and began spitting about on the carpets. They put a dirty Russian footman into Miss Grey's bed. The King's servants would not do anything, nor the Russians, therefore the Commissioner's servants were obliged to do all the work, and sit up all night. There were several men cooks and scullions. The Russians have no regular meals, but eat when they are disposed. There was constantly hot meat upon the table, and as soon as the joint was cut it was taken away, and another one brought.

The ships at Spithead were all formed into line and looked beautiful.

Wednesday. The Regent arrived about five o'clock : when he got to the top of Portsdown Hill, all the guns from the batteries were fired. He had a strong guard with him, and was preceded by the ropemakers dressed in white, with blue ribbons. He was much applauded, and appeared in high good humour. As soon as he arrived the guns were again fired, and answered from the ships. He held a levée for naval officers directly, and I counted 84 who walked to the Government House with the Duke of Clarence. Papa dined with the Regent.

About seven we went to call on Mrs. Grey, and not finding her at home we took our station by the side of the road where the Emperor was expected to pass. It was a very rainy cold evening, and we were almost tired when the Commissioner found us out, and was good enough to let us go into his house. There were many false alarms of the Emperor's arrival: the officers on guard and in waiting were quite faint and begged some wine. I was told they had been on duty for *thirteen hours*. We stood till eleven o'clock, when the Emperor arrived with the Duchess. The Commissioner walked before them with the candles into the Drawing-room, where they stood two or three minutes and then went upstairs. The Emperor ran down again to see Lord Sidmouth,¹ Lord Melville,² Count Lieven,³ etc. Every time he passed he looked round and bowed—he then went up to tea and drank some *rum*. He was dressed in a plain blue coat and Wellington pantaloons and half boots. The Duchess had a high straw bonnet and feathers, a grey stuff gown with three rows of grey ribbon, and a brown shawl over it. She is very fair. When she went upstairs she seemed pleased with her room and said it was very comfortable. Mrs. Grey was desired by the interpreter to go up to her, and she asked her several questions, how many children she had, etc.

We then went back to Portsmouth: all the town was illuminated, and the streets as full as they could hold of people, who walked about almost all night, singing 'God save the King' and 'Rule Britannia.' We did not get much sleep, and rose a little after six, in order to be ready to go on board next morning.

Thursday. At nine o'clock we went on board the *Prince*,

¹ Home Secretary.

² First Lord of the Admiralty.

³ The Russian Ambassador.

Sir Richard Bickerton's ship, which was near the *Impregnable* the Duke of Clarence's. The King of Prussia breakfasted on board the *Royal Sovereign*. As soon as the procession of boats came in sight a salute of 21 guns was fired from each ship : the salute was repeated when they all got on board. The Admiralty Flag and Royal Standard were then hoisted on board the *Impregnable*. All the ships were manned. The little boats got in crowds round the *Impregnable* cheering, and the Sovereigns came forward repeatedly and bowed. We had a cold dinner on board and very hungry we were. Three or four frigates sailed about, which added greatly to the sight. We left the ship and lay upon our oars till they were nearly arrived. We saw the firing to much greater advantage than on board, and there was a *feu de joie* all round the lines which was beautiful.

The Regent landed at the Sally Port and the Emperor of Russia at the King's Stairs : we arrived there just before him. Papa was introduced and the Emperor shook hands with him. We then scampered up, at the risk of our lives, among the Guards who were prancing about in several divisions, and so we were consequently obliged to walk as fast as they rode, or we should have been run over, as there was a large party of them behind us. When we got to the Commisioner's we saw nothing except all the Navy officers going to be presented, so we walked back again, got into our boat, and were landed at the Sally Port. Papa dined at the Crown Inn, with some of the grandees. The Emperor and Duchess passed our house in the evening : they dined with the Regent. A large party of horse attended to make way for them. Blücher arrived, and was drawn by the populace. I saw a sailor dancing and hurraing at the top of his carriage, several people attempted to pull him down, but without success. The crowds were so great that the

military had great difficulty in keeping a passage for him, and the horses of the soldiers were capering about on the pavement to keep them off; but the tars were not easily frightened, and clung to the carriage like bees.

There was a *feu de joie* and a salute fired at ten o'clock; it was rather a dark night, and the flashes from the ships, and now and then some rockets sent up, was the prettiest thing I ever saw. There was likewise a fire balloon which attracted much attention. The whole town was illuminated, but I was afraid of going to the Government House, on account of the concourse of people, and seeing a poor woman carried along with a broken leg, made me feel less inclined to venture.

Friday morning we went to the Dockyard and waited in the passage till the Emperor arrived. He met the Regent at the door of the house and handed him downstairs. The King of Prussia and sons, Duke of York, Duke of Cambridge, Counts Metternich and Lieven, Prince Gagarini, Prince of Oldenburgh, Prince of Wirtemberg, Duke of Clarence, Blücher, with Miss Fitzclarence under his arm, Lords Erskine, Sidmouth, Melville, and many others came in and stood in the vestibule, so that we were in the midst of them all.

When the Duchess of Oldenburgh came down the Emperor introduced Miss Fitzclarence to her. Mama was presented to Alexander by the Duke of Clarence as the wife of the Admiral, and the niece of Lord St. Vincent. The Regent was very ungracious to Lady Ponsonby. Count Overoff (?) who we were told strangled the Emperor Paul,¹ was there, and in high favour.

Papa introduced me to Blücher, who shook hands with me. He was almost pulled to pieces.

They all set off to see the Dockyard, and we followed,

¹ *Father of Alexander I.*

but unluckily being immediately behind Col. Mellish who was walking with Lady Gore, he desired the Constable not to let us in to the rope-walk, but having the right to do so we attempted to pass, and the Constable was then going to knock Mr. Long down, which frightened me so much that I began to cry. I then made myself known to Lady Gore, hoping that would prevent any further impertinence, but Col. Mellish instantly began abusing Mr. Long, and said it was all his own fault and that the Constable had only done his duty. Lady Gore offered to take me in, but as I had quite as good a right to go there as she could possibly have, I declined the honour, not wishing to have any more of Col. Mellish's conversation. We then went to the King's Stairs and found most of our party who were very tired. As soon as we were all collected we got into the boat and went back to Portsmouth.

We got on board the *Ville de Paris* before the firing began. Lady Gore, Miss Fitzclarence, and Mrs. Blackwood were on board the *Impregnable*. The Emperor was ill the day before, and preferred seeing Haslar Hospital. The Regent, King of Prussia and party, first went on board the *Royal Sovereign*, and then on board the *Impregnable*, which last ship did not sail in the line in order that they might have a better view of the fleet. We sailed about fifteen miles and performed several manœuvres : I never saw so fine a sight. The wind was fortunately favourable for our return, or we should have been kept out all night. There were on board, besides ourselves, Sir H. and Lady Neale, Lady Sinclair, Mrs. Whitbey, her brother Capt. Simmonds, etc., etc. There was likewise a Polish General who had distinguished himself very highly : his name was something like Sobriski : he had fought for Buonaparte till the allies entered Paris, and was a very pleasant, gentlemanlike man.

A young officer whose name was Florentin, a Pole by birth but of Italian parents, attracted our attention by his pleasing manners. Seeing him taken no notice of I spoke to him, and he told me he had been at Moscow, and at Leipzig where he was nearly killed. He said that Paris was far from being quiet, and that he infinitely preferred London. He had often dined with Buonaparte before the Russians made war against him, and of course had a good deal of conversation. He spoke in raptures of the Archduke Constantine,¹ said that he was not so brusque as he had been, but that he was never governed by man, *woman*, or child. He said in appearance he was not like the Emperor, that he had rather large eyebrows. He likewise said the English had mistaken their attentions, that Platoff and Barclay de Tolly deserved more credit, but that Blücher's name was better known.

There were some very disagreeable Frenchmen who were very forward and behaved extremely ill : nobody knew how they got on board. We dined at $\frac{1}{2}$ past five, and then went all over the ship. There was a curious old clock which had been on the old *Ville de Paris*, in the carpenter's shop. We left the ship after the great people, and the firing from the Batteries and ships was repeated the same as the day before.

When we got home we found an invitation to a ball given by the Regent that evening at the 'Crown' : we had just time to dress and go there. We drove up to the door just before the Emperor's carriage : they made us drive on, and we were obliged to get out in the midst of a tremendous crowd, with no place to walk in but the gutter, the guards having possession of the middle of the street, and the people

¹ Brother of Alexander. Subsequently renounced his right of succession in favour of his younger brother Nicholas.

of the pavement. We saw Lord Wellington get out of his carriage, and the guards and Constables had hard work to prevent the carriage doors being opened. When we went upstairs we saw Miss Fitzclarence standing between the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia. Lady Taxton and Miss Oliver were the only ladies in the room, and the Duke of Wellington and all the great men stood opposite.

The Emperor opened the ball with Miss Fitzclarence : I stood next with Lord Stewart, but Elizabeth, dancing with the Crown Prince of Prussia, stood above me. He asked Mama to dance, but she declined in favour of Elizabeth. Anne danced with the Prince of Oldenburgh, Martha with Prince Fredrick of Prussia, Lord Burghersh with a lady in black, Henrietta with the Hon. Col. Craven, etc. The Emperor asked for a Scotch tune, and several were played before they began, which they did to the tune of ' I'll gang no mair to your town ' with hands across. The Emperor never sat down, but was attentive in turn to every person that danced.

There were about 55 couples, and when we got to the top we began again with the same tune, but a different figure. After that dance was over the Emperor took out Lady Gore : Mrs. Blackwood and Lord Stewart followed, Lady B. A. Cooper and Lord Arthur Hill, etc. The Prince of Prussia asked me to dance, but his father carried him away before it began. The Emperor came up to me, and asked me how I had hurt my arm, in English. I answered him in French that it was in running after him, and then he asked me in French whether it was '*un coup*.' As soon as that dance was over he went away, and we went to supper. The Duke of Clarence desired the Ladies would drink a bumper toast, and then gave the Prince Regent, with a speech and three times three. Next the Allied Sovereigns

three times three, Duke of Wellington three times three Papa gave the Duke of Clarence six times six, which was drunk with great applause. The Duke got up and said he hoped the next time they did him that honour he should deserve more of his country than he had hitherto done. He then gave the Ladies with three times three, and moved to go into the ballroom, where dancing began again, and when we left at four o'clock was not over.

There were there : The Emperor, King of Prussia, with his sons and nephew, Prince of Oldenburgh, Duke of Saxe Weimar, Duke of Wellington, General Blücher, Lord Stewart, Lord Burghersh, Lord Sidmouth, Lord Erskine, Lord and Lady Melville, Marquis and Marchioness of Ely, Lady Shaftesbury, Lady B. A. Cooper, Lady Dunmore, Lady Gore, Lady Taxton and Mrs. Oliver, Lord Orford, Lord Arthur Hill, Lord Yarmouth, Mrs. Ponsonby, Col. Craven, Col. Mellish, Duke of Dorset, Sir John Beresford, Sir Edmund Nash, Sir B. and Lady Bickerten, Sir Henry and Lady Neale, Mrs. Blackwood, Sir George Martin, Sir George Grey, Mrs. Heathcote, Mrs. Chute, Duke of Clarence, Miss Fitzclarence, Hon. Mrs. Fitzclarence, Capt. Warde, Capt. Simmonds, Capt. Byron, Mrs. Griffiths and daughters, Mrs. Jefferson and Miss Brown, Mrs. Dixon and Mrs. Newland, Miss Cuthbert, etc., etc., and numbers of foreigners whose names I did not know.

The Emperor said that on that day two years, the French crossed the Niemen,¹ and he then little thought he should celebrate the defeat at Portsmouth.

Next morning the Corporation waited upon the Regent and he held a Levee. We saw him set off attended by a party of horse, and he was saluted by the ships and batteries. He called upon Blücher, who was going to breakfast upon

¹ *Napoleon's invasion of Russia, June 1812.*

coffee : he has always a candle on the table to light his pipe by. The glass of the miniature given him by the Regent broke. When his carriage came to the door, the crowd was so great the soldiers were obliged to cut about, and the mob hissed them all down the street.

There was a review on Portsdown Hill which we did not go to.

We got home that evening, and I was glad to get a little rest after the great fatigue I had gone through.

DO YOU REMEMBER . . . ?

(To S.M.M.)

*Do you remember all the hours we've spent,
We two ? How once we climbed the little hill ?
The sunlit morning, filled with flowers, we went
Among the woodland trees ? Remember still*

*That day the grey rain slanted down, and how
We rode through swirling mists in fading light ?
Saw you the moon peep through the pine-tree bough
While we sang lovesongs to the listening night ?*

*We two have watched the golden-headed sun
Climb down the sky and sink into the sea ;
He's seen us walk, and swim, and leap, and run.
He's heard us reading chosen poetry.*

*In our rich happiness these have their part.
Will you not throne them always in your heart ?*

H. E. WESLEY SMITH.

Adelaide,
South Australia.

SILVER SHOES.

BY LIDA GUSTAVA HEYMANN.

I.

A PERFECT LADY from the crown of her head to the sole of her silver shoes. That was her own judgment as she examined in the looking-glass her reflected image.

Her short thick hair, already a little grey, was arranged artistically to suit the fine shape of her head. It glistened like silver under the electric light. A black dress left her arms, neck and shoulders free, and flowed in beautiful lines on her slender and well-proportioned figure, and it ended in a long train everything up to date ! Her only ornament was a thin silver necklace fastened by a large blue sapphire. The stone glittered strikingly and provokingly vieing with the sparkling blue of her own bright eyes ; her feet were shod in silver shoes. Satisfied and content, she smiled at her reflection in the mirror. Everything about her person was as perfect as her attire. In fact no expert in beauty-culture, knowing all the secrets of the trade, would find it possible to believe that she was nearly fifty years old or that her dress had not come from one of the most renowned ateliers of Paris but had been made in a few hours by her own skilled hands. Her skin was perfect, the face had no wrinkles, the cheeks and lips were so discreetly coloured that even an expert might have sworn that it was the work of nature.

A joyful feeling of happiness came over her, for to-night she was to satisfy all her natural longing. She liked to meet the élite of brilliant Society and to feel herself one of them.

She laughed to think that nobody would guess that she lived in an attic with a balcony on the seventh floor in the same beautiful building in the best part of a Swiss capital, where a few years ago she had possessed a fine apartment of seven rooms on the first floor and had enjoyed all the comfort which wealth and service could give her. In those days her motor-car was at her disposal at any moment. The sudden change in her fortunes had been caused by the break-down of the dollar.

To-night there was a big Reception and dinner at the American Embassy. The whole of the Geneva diplomatic service would be there as well as eminent politicians and representatives of the International Press. At this Reception, our 'Grande Dame' would get all the first-rate political news and interesting gossip from International politicians anxious to entertain her. Suddenly awakened from this pleasant anticipation, she looked at her watch and was scared to find that it was more than time to set out for the Reception. Only a few months ago she would have rung the bell and asked the maidservant to tell the chauffeur to bring round the car, but the maidservant, the chauffeur and the motor-car had all vanished. There was no telephone in the attic ; as it was the end of the month, her budget would not allow her a taxi. There was no time now to consider what should be done for not a minute was to be lost. She quickly changed her silver shoes for solid street boots, put them into a bag and hurried into her cloak ; but another problem faced her. What about the long train ? For one moment she was baffled, then with an energetic movement, she gathered up skirt and train, hung them over her arm with the bag containing the silver shoes and flew down the staircase to the sixth floor where she was able to get the lift which did not serve people who lived in the attics. Arriving on the ground

floor, she took her bicycle and hurried like a girl of twenty through the streets of Geneva and arrived in good time.

Soon afterwards she found herself by the side of a well-known attaché Mr. 'H,' at an exquisitely equipped dinner-table surrounded with beautiful flowers, with shining silver and crystal in keeping with her sparkling spirits. The conversation with her neighbour did not halt for one moment. It ranged over Abyssinia, Italy, the League of Nations, Japan, Spain, Hitler-Germany and the entire International world. Life and excitement glowed in 'Silver Shoes.' She was conscious of the glances of many eyes resting in admiration upon her—she was in her own element. This was an evening after her own taste. She was enjoying herself immensely ; her happiness made her even more attractive.

It was long after midnight before the party broke up. Just as our 'Grande Dame' was about to take her cloak, her neighbour at the dinner-table met her and begged to be allowed to take her home in his motor-car. There was one moment of consternation, as she thought of the bag with her street boots upon her arm under the cloak and beheld the bicycle at some distance from the main road in a narrow lane. What was she to do ? The next moment our Society Queen had mastered the situation. Smiling gracious thanks she accepted the kind offer and gave the address of the fashionable building in which she lived. How could Mr. 'H' guess that a few moments after he had set her down at the entrance to her home, she was standing in her attic shaking with laughter. Quickly humming a merry tune, she changed her silver shoes for her street boots and her elegant velvet gown with its train into a simple skirt and pullover. A little while later she was walking light footed through the deserted streets of the town to recover her bicycle. She found it where she had left it six hours ago. She rode home in the

quiet night filled with the consciousness that riches alone do not make happiness—on the contrary, she realised that never before had she felt the charm of poverty as she did that night. She felt so free, so independent of everything, of service, of comforts and of all that money could buy. Never had she been so self-reliant as she was at that moment. That evening seemed to bring back the happy days of childhood when she played many tricks upon the solemn grown-up world, and her successful escapade gave her the feeling of mischievous joy. She had no feeling of regret for the change that had occurred in her circumstances. As she arrived home, put her bicycle away and climbed up the staircase that led to the seventh floor, for of course it was far too late for the lift to be working, she entered her tiny attic and opened the door to the balcony. She looked up to the night sky with its millions of sparkling stars in measureless space. She was overpowered with the immensity of beauty of the heavens which she had never seen like that when she lived in her beautiful first-floor apartment. Standing under the stars, her solitude, her complete independence gave to her a new hitherto unrealised joy. There was nothing in the world to hamper her, she was absolutely free and entirely at one with the universe. The wonder of that moment overcame her. Life was a miracle. In complete inward calm and happiness she gave one more worshipping look to the beautiful heavens, then lay down and slept a dreamless happy sleep until the sun brought her a joyous awakening.

THE WAYFARING TREE.

*In the full warmth of May,
 Ere shining hedgerows all with dust are dimmed,
 While yet the lengthening day
 Doth for awhile delay
 His triumph of the solstice,—then all brimmed
 And foamed with blossom like a creaming sea
 The pale wayfaring tree
 Makes all the hedgeside and the season sweet.*

*But later, when the wheat
 No more is green, but from the strengthening sun
 Takes its first tinge, and half July is done,
 While all about the hedges wantonly
 Red bryony and the woody nightshade run ;
 Then, following the swift season faithfully,
 The dark wayfaring tree,
 Her blossoms shed,
 And all with scarlet jewelled berries spread,
 From the dimmed hedgerow shines exultantly.*

*The year moves on ; the hangers darken down
 To duskier hues of August ; the hedge wears
 No bloom save where the lesser umbels blow
 Of the swart dogwood ;—and now tawny brown
 And rustling dryly to the faintest airs
 The waiting cornfields shudder, and at night
 And under moonless skies of Autumn, glow
 And shimmer with their strange and inward light.*

*Still moves the year ; the corn is reaped, and still
Sprout the harsh bents upon the stubbled hill.
Too faithful tree ! For now the enfeebled year
With wistful face moves slower on to death ;
In every wind doth sound a dying breath ;
And misted morning skies, at noonday clear,
Merge into mist again 'ere evening fall.
Now sobbing airs about the woodland call,
While with a colder and more frequent rain,
That hath all lost its thrilling scent of grass,
The cold skies weep again.*

*Earth sees this latest of the seasons pass ;
And the wayfaring tree,
Which now lets fall
Its harsh and brittle leaves all marbled o'er
With purple and with livid hues of death,—
In the cold breath
And frequent weeping of the Autumn airs
Now only bears
Above the hedges' wrack
Dull-rattling leaves and wrinkled berries black.*

ANTHONY FFETTYPLACE.

‘MRS. JANE.’

BY ELIZABETH MARY WRIGHT.

‘FOR nearly sixty years faithful nurse and friend in the family of’ . . . So runs the inscription on the marble kerb which outlines the grave of Elizabeth Jane Munro, who died in 1917, at the age of eighty-seven. At the foot of the grave is the text : ‘God is Love.’

We still occasionally read similar testimonials in the obituary columns of newspapers, attached to the name of somebody’s ‘Nannie,’ a pet-name that has now become a professional term for a children’s nurse. We may see in another column : ‘Wanted, a nannie.’ But the old family nurse of whom I write was never ‘Nannie,’ she had too much personality to be designated by the title of a class. She belonged to another type and generation, essentially Victorian, or rather, Early Victorian. I use the word in the sense it has always had—and always will have—for me. To me it stands for a background and an abiding tradition of love and simple piety, of genuine and conscientious devotion to duty and service ; and our nurse was a shining example of those Victorian virtues and ideals. We called her Jane, or Mrs. Jane by courtesy in later years. She had previously been known as Lizzie, or Elizabeth, but that was my mother’s name, so the new nurse was told that her second name of Jane must now be adopted. In those early days domestic rules were much more personal and stringent. At the outset my mother as the wife of a clergyman found it necessary to say that no servant of hers might wear flowers in her bonnet. And days, since such tokens of vanity must not be seen

in the pew allotted to the Parsonage staff. However, my mother was an enlightened woman, in advance of her age, and maids came, and did her bidding, and stayed with her for years.

The few details I learned about E. J. M.'s childhood I gleaned from her in her old age, and I give them here as nearly as possible in her own words, from the notes I wrote down at the time.

We were from our childhood given to understand that she belonged to 'the poor branch of the Munro family,' and that she had a clan of remote and grand kinsfolk in Scotland. She was a Londoner by birth. Her father was a cabinet-maker, who worked for a firm in Bond Street, and who lived in Howland Street, close to Fitzroy Square. Her mother had been a cook. E. J. M. was the second child. She had one sister, older than herself, and two younger brothers. 'I was always brought up to work,' she said, and her life and character showed that she was brought up in a home atmosphere of high principles, of careful thrift, and the strict but kindly discipline of old-fashioned Christianity. One glimpse she gave me of her mother's teaching :

'I went to school in Albany Street, near Regent's Park. I remember some children there, called Hunter. They were nice, but dirty, and I didn't like sitting by them. I told Mother about them, and she scolded me for saying I didn't want to sit by them.'

When E. J. M. was about nine years old, her mother died, and two years later her father married again. The step-mother had previously been a dressmaker : 'She was a very good woman. I shall always speak well of her. She taught me all she could with the needle. People wore six flounces then, and Stepmother taught me to do them—flounce upon flounce, and the cordings too.'

E. J. M. must have left school very young, for she was only ten years old when she went out into domestic service, to help an aunt. 'Aunt Jane,' she related, 'had been upper-housemaid at the Palace, where she had £9 a year. People used to think it grand to get a place at the Palace, but you didn't get high wages, not under Queen Victoria.' By now Aunt Jane must have left 'to better herself,' for she was at this time, 'upper-housemaid at Sir John Mordaunt's, in Belgrave Square,' where she was left in sole charge for nine months

'to see to all the house-cleaning. The people asked her if she knew of anybody to be with her, so she said she had a niece, and that was how I came to stay with her the nine months. There were some white chairs, and I had to clean them. Aunt said I had been well taught.'

After this, at the age of eleven, E. J. M. went as housemaid to some people called Dawson :

'My father knew one of the housemaids, and so he heard about the place. The housekeeper had said she would like to see me when I was fit for service. My father took me. I had a black velvet cape, lined with red. I remember it very well and the housekeeper lifted it up—like this—and said, "Well, there isn't much of her for eleven."'

It was a very large house, where there were six maids, a footman, a butler, and a housekeeper. E. J. M.'s wages were £4 a year, and her clothes, 'but,' she says, 'I managed to save even then. I got up at five every morning, and there was bread and butter and some milk in the housekeeper's room for me. She was very kind to me.' The housekeeper was, nevertheless, a very strict supervisor :

'I had sometimes to do things two or three times over, if they were not properly done. It's the only way to make girls tidy. There was a copper kettle that had to be done

every day, and I had to show it to the housekeeper, and sometimes I had to polish it three times over. The work had to be done at the proper time, there was no putting it off till to-morrow. The housekeeper told me when I went there, always to be careful to sweep the dust out of the corners of the room, and the middle would take care of itself. So I left the dust all under the table in the middle of the room, and then she asked me why I had done that, so I told her that was what she had told me to do. I had a card with the work all put down that I had. I used to have to scour the boards in the housekeeper's bedroom about three times a week, and when I had finished scrubbing them, I had to take a pail of fresh water and a sponge, and wipe them all, the way of the boards. I used to hearthstone the kitchen stairs from top to bottom, and when they were dry, I used to look at them to see that they were white. Girls would find out a difference if they had nowadays to do what I did.'

In addition to all this hard work, there was

'a good deal of sewing. There were plenty of sheets to turn sides into the middle, and to patch, for the bed-linen was provided for the coachman and grooms over the stables ; and I sewed seams for the maids, in my own time that was, after six o'clock in the evening.'

The butler and the footman wore white gloves, and E. J. M. used to wash these in her own time, and they paid her a penny a pair for doing it.

One is glad to think that she was able to say when looking back to such a toilsome period of her girlhood : 'I was very happy and comfortable.' Here the reminiscences she narrated to me come to an end, and there is a long gap in E. J. M.'s known history. I cannot tell how soon she gave up housework for the nursery, nor have I ever heard any stories of babies she had nursed before she came to us. Perhaps her devotion to us soon became so absorbing that her

interest in other nurseries she had known gradually dwindled away. She once told me the story of a father of a family where she was nursemaid, who was consumptive, and by way of a remedy for his complaint he had to swallow live baby frogs before breakfast every morning. The treatment apparently was thoroughly successful, for the reason why she then recalled it was that she had just seen in a newspaper the notice of the gentleman's death in 1910, at the age of eighty-eight. She liked us to realise that she had renounced the world for our behoof. We grew up with the firm belief that, but for a succession of babies in this our home, she would have married a dashing young red-coated officer she had met and danced with at an Artillery Ball in the dim past. I believe this was pure legend, but it provided food for the young imagination when fairy-story books were thought to be harmful. There was also the wondrous tale of how she had once held open a gate for the Duke of Wellington, and how, though she had not liked the peremptory way in which he had commanded her to do him this service, he had turned round on his horse and said 'Thank you' to her. The reflected glory which then thrilled us is an abiding memory to-day.

It was in August, 1858, when my second brother was a month old, that my mother engaged E. J. M. as a nurse. She was then about twenty-seven, fully trained and experienced. One of her assets which had some weight with my mother, was that E. J. M. was a plain young woman, unlike her more comely predecessor, who had been wont to bestow her attention on a bevy of young men in the park or public-house instead of on the baby in her charge. My mother always kept detailed account of the household expenditure, and these old account-books show that E. J. M.'s wages for the first year—with two babies in the nursery—were £12,

raised the following year to £13. In 1869, after the birth of the seventh baby, they were raised from £16 16s. to £20, finally rising to £25 in 1882. She spent so little on herself, that her savings amounted to a considerable sum, even before this date, but she foolishly lent her capital to her brothers, and they lost it all in a commercial venture which proved a failure. She was always generous and unselfish in all her actions, because she found delight in giving, and never thought of self first. I remember once when I chanced to be the proud possessor of twopence, I was allowed to go to a neighbouring shop and purchase an egg, which I thought would do my nurse good, as she had not been well. She shared that egg with three little girls round the nursery tea-table, so the actual benefit to herself was small. In her last years, when she lived in a Home, I used to take her farthing buns, and a collection of the smallest apples and flowers from my garden, because it gave her so much pleasure to have a large number of gifts to distribute among the other patients.

My father had been appointed Perpetual Curate of Holy Trinity, Stepney, in 1855, hence, Trinity Parsonage, Coborn Road, Bow Road, London, E., was the home address we were taught as part of our individual names, but under the vigilant eye of E. J. M. there was little risk of our being lost in the streets of London. She took us every day to walk in Victoria Park. I suppose in the beginning she always had to carry the tiny baby of the family, but later there was a perambulator, like a miniature bath-chair, in which the child sat upright. The luxurious landau type of carriage had not yet been invented, or if so, it would have been much too expensive for our modest home. We had a big attic nursery, with a window at each end, and a well-scrubbed boarded floor. One of my brothers wrote to me not long ago :

'Recently at the Parsonage, I told the Incumbent that if he was ever hard up, he could take up the nursery boards, and recover the pennies we used to "borrow" from Jane in order to drop them down the cracks. Penny-in-the-slot machines were not invented. The modern child would want something for his money.'

She was very strict about our behaviour at table. Good manners belonged to sound education, and were not to be merely an added veneer for 'company' downstairs. One of her meal-time maxims presented a serious difficulty to the young and hungry at the board: 'Those that ask shan't have, and those that don't ask don't want.' But somehow we never went empty away. Her age was a mystery we could not solve. Any leading enquiries were met by the answer: 'I'm as old as my tongue, and a little older than my teeth.' If she thought we needed a serious scolding, she gave it us loudly on the front stairs, so that my mother should know all about it. This was part of her code of honesty.

In the year 1872, when my father was told he must give up the strenuous work of an East London parish, we all went to live in the country. After one year in Somerset, near Glastonbury, we moved to the remote parish—it could not call itself a village, it was so very sparsely populated—of Tedstone Delamere, in Herefordshire, where we remained for the next twenty years. E. J. M. taught us many things of lasting value, but 'lessons' out of books she could not give us, and the time soon came when my sisters and I needed more instruction than my mother had time to give us, so, a year or two after we came to Tedstone, a resident governess was engaged. This was at first a sore trial to E. J. M., for her love was a jealous love, and she never ceased to think of us as her children, under her special care. She

had no outside interests. Indeed, there was nothing for her to do or to see on a 'day off,' for we were five miles from the nearest town, and there was not even a carrier's cart on the road. We had no horse, nor even a pony to convey anybody anywhere. We, and our cats and their families—and sometimes, in bad weather, newly-hatched chickens and ducks—had the free run of the Rectory stables to the end of our time at Tedstone Delamere. The other maids had parents or friends in the neighbourhood who could be visited on foot.—E. J. M. would have said 'on Shanks's pony'—on a 'day off,' lighted on their return by the moon in her humble role of 'the parish lantern.' E. J. M. had no country relations. She still reigned in a 'nursery,' though now that the governess taught us lessons in the dining-room in the morning, and took us for walks in the afternoon, we needed less attention from our nurse. So she bestowed some of her motherly care on the cats and the hens. These last were her special interest and pride. In the worst of weathers she would tramp out into the orchard with food at the regulation times, and her chickens never suffered from diseases due to lack of clean fresh water. She would hatch in her own bed the final eggs of a sitting, when the mother hen was bored, and had left the nest taking the hatched chickens with her. E. J. M. was always the friend of the neglected, and she loved all animals. My sister's magpie was allowed to sit perched on her cap, although he had stolen her thimble. There were always saucers of milk in a corner of the nursery for the cats, and the low window was left open at the bottom, so that the kittens could easily jump in and out when they pleased, for now our nursery was on the ground floor, looking on to the lawn and garden. Once when E. J. M. was in bed with a sick headache, my youngest sister, wishful to cheer her, carried up to her bedside a handful

of little rats, all pink and unhappy out of their nest, squirming in her palm, to show to the invalid. E. J. M. said she loved seeing them, and that it had done her so much good that she already felt better. As my sister had feared her nurse might really be dying, she too was cheered.

Now and again E. J. M. used to tell us that Tedstone was 'a dull hole,' and 'never another winter' would she spend there, but these were idle words. I can see her now, the day the telegram came to say that my father had died after an operation in London, forlornly sitting on a chair by the nursery door, with her white apron held to her eyes, sobbing out: 'How *could* I ever have said I would leave you! How *could* I ever have said it!' And we were no longer frail nurslings, except in her imagination, for the youngest of us was by then twenty-six.

All her life she was a lover of flowers. There was a black polyanthus distributed about the Tedstone garden, the original root of which came, via the Somerset vicarage, from a penny plant E. J. M. had bought off a barrow in the East End of London.

The old family servant is sometimes a source of discord in a household, but E. J. M. gained respect in the kitchen, and one or two of the young maids became her lifelong friends. She acted as bridesmaid to the Tedstone housemaid who married the village blacksmith, and in accordance with local custom she sat with the bridal pair in the front pew in church the Sunday after the wedding.

Her London upbringing had not infected her speech with a Cockney accent, though she had the usual Cockney gift of repartee. Many of the expressions she commonly used are now quite out of date. When plagued by tiresome childish requests she would say: 'Go to Bath,' or 'You'll drive me to Bedlam'; and in cases of still greater exaspera-

tion : ' I shall give your mother a month's notice.' My youngest brother recalls the retort : ' *You* want the top brick of the chimney.' ' This,' he says, ' puzzled my young mind, for of the three terrors, coal-carts, dustmen, and sweep, the last was easily the most fearsome. So how could I wish him to come to the nursery to gratify my desires ? ' If we refused our food, we were told : ' Then there'll be more for those that like it.' Instead of current exclamations such as ' Lor ! ' or ' Lawks ! ' which she would have considered low and vulgar, E. J. M. said ' Good Night ! ' This harmless ejaculation, if repeated by us downstairs, could not entail reproof from our parents, nor shock the most fastidious maiden aunt. Outdoor clothes for herself were termed ' bonnet and shawl,' even when the latter had been replaced by a jacket or mantle. I do not think the bonnet ever gave way to a more modern hat. ' Best ' clothes were ' Sunday-go-to-Meeting ' garments, or ' my best bib and tucker ' ; and something very new was fit only ' for high-days and holidays and bonfire-nights.' When she went by train, she would travel ' Parliamentary,' a term now confined to dictionaries, dating back to ' 7 and 8 Vict.,' when, by an Act of Parliament, every railway company was ' obliged to run daily each way over its system ' one train at a penny a mile. A candle was a ' tolly-dip,' even if not made of tallow. We used to buy the genuine article at the one and only village shop when we lived in Somerset. I remember the bunches of these candles hanging up by their wicks, and they lighted us to bed. E. J. M.'s expression for a difficult situation with which to cope, an awkward job to tackle, was : ' Well, this *is* a job of journey-works ! ' And a puzzling dilemma might be ' a pretty kettle of fish.' A job of little consequence she might take up with the remark : ' Well, whilst I'm doing that, I'm doing nothing else.'

Anything askew would be said to be 'All on one side, like Bridgnorth election.' According to the *English Dialect Dictionary* this phrase belongs only to Worcestershire and Shropshire, so E. J. M. may have picked it up at Tedstone, which was close to the borders of Worcestershire. She was a traditional Anglo-Saxon in her use of negatives: 'Don't never tell me,' 'You didn't ought,' 'You hadn't any ought.' As an expert with her needle, she was critical of poor workmanship in the art of plain sewing. 'That must have been done with a broken needle and a burnt thread,' she would say of a hem or seam which had come undone. Her own work was automatically neat and fine, even when her eyesight was failing in old age.

It was after the death of my father in 1893, when my mother was living at West Kirby, in Cheshire, that E. J. M. broke her leg by falling on the floor in her bedroom. It was an added grief to her that the accident had occurred in this unexpected fashion, because she had been keeping to the house that winter, for fear of slipping on frosty roads, and becoming a source of trouble to my mother and sisters if she should injure herself by a fall. Doctors said she would never be able to walk again, but though the bone would not unite properly, and the patient would not use crutches, she did manage to walk, even if lamely, for yet another twenty-five years. She liked to tell us that she had ruined her health with sleepless nights when we were tiresome babies, but she had really a strong and wiry constitution in her small frame, and when she died, it was from sheer old age, and not from any disease.

When the family home was broken up, after my mother's death, E. J. M. lived with my sisters who were working in London, and later she lodged with a former cook, married and settled in London. But the time came when, after she

had had a serious stroke, we felt she must not be alone any more, and that the only thing to do was to place her in some Home where she would always be under skilled supervision. So she came to the St. John's Home and Hospital in Oxford, where she was under the care of the All Saints' Sisters. From there she could often come to see me, and when she was unable to do that, I could visit her. Naturally she felt the change rather a hardship at first, but the Sisters were kind and considerate, and there were other fairly able-bodied patients like herself, and she soon grew accustomed to life in a community where there were very few rules, a big garden, and all possible freedom. She had the Old Evangelical hatred of anything in religious observances which savoured of 'popery,' and she would have been miserable if obliged to attend High Church services on week-days. Simple family prayers read daily in the wards gave no offence, and only preserved a form of worship to which she had been accustomed. If she had a grievance against the regime, she complained about it openly to the Sisters. She would not utter a fault-finding word behind anybody's back. She had always been a reader, and now books were her great resource, and I had an almost unlimited supply of novels and story-books amassed by my husband when collecting material for the *Dialect Dictionary*. She spent her days contentedly reading and sewing by a cheerful fire in the big dining-room ; or, in summer, she strolled in the garden in her Herefordshire sun-bonnet. Indoors she wore a lace cap with a ribbon bow in the front of it, and a sateen apron—usually black, or black with white spots on it—changed to a silk one on Sundays.

For some years she was able every summer to pay a visit to the blacksmith's wife at Tedstone, and then gradually she became less and less active. Finally, after about fourteen

years at the Home, a series of slight strokes led her gently towards the gate of death. She was losing her grip on everyday life, and present surroundings. The horrors of the Great War left her untouched. I only once found her in a sad mood, and that was before her mind was completely wrapt in old memories : ' I want to go and work for Mrs. Lea, and they say I'm too old.' It was only a fleeting phase, before consciousness of age and infirmity left her for good, and her mind went back to live over again the happy days in the nursery of long ago. She babbled of babies. I used to sit by her bedside and listen, and watch for the happy smile on her face when she had coaxed a fretful baby into cheerfulness : ' There, there, don't cry, look at the pretty gee-gee !' Or, to a bigger child : ' Don't cry, it's silly to cry and not say what's the matter.' She knew what was the matter, for she turned her head towards me and said : ' It's because his mother can't give him butter. It's one-and-fourpence a pound.' And then she smiled, and looking back at her dream-child, she murmured : ' Little rascal !' and I knew she felt again her own and the little child's contentment when she had given him a large spoonful of treacle to make up for the lack of butter. Once again I heard the old familiar exclamation we knew in nursery days : ' Good Night ! What would your mother say if I gave you that ?' One saw imaged in all her unconscious ramblings the unsullied purity of her whole life, her selfless kindness, and her thought for the young and helpless. She never uttered an unkind word. Once, when she seemed to have heard somebody blame a man for theft, she said : ' Poor man ! You must remember that his wife and children were starving.' When she was not dreaming of a child on her knee, her unconscious fingers were turning down and folding hems on the edge of the sheet ; and she would thread imaginary

needles, drawing through them a long length of invisible cotton, and knotting it at the end.

As I watched day by day, seeing her physical strength slowly ebbing, I felt not so much a sense of sadness, but rather one of gladness and wonder, for here was proof positive that love is stronger than death. Often when neither the Sisters nor the doctor could arouse in her any response, so lifeless were all her bodily faculties, when I arrived and greeted her as usual with : ' How are you to-day, Mrs. Jane ? ' she would instantly reply in a firm voice : ' Quite well, thank you.' She heard my voice when deaf to any other sound. Her love for us remained a living thing till every atom of breath had left her mortal body, and then it passed on into another sphere of life and activity. Only a few hours before she died, when for some time she had seemed to have no consciousness left in her, I ventured to tell her that my sister Ellen had come to see her. By sheer strength of love, Mrs. Jane sat up in bed, looking round, with eyes from which all earthly power of vision had gone, to welcome her youngest child. Then, conscious only that we were beside her, all worldly things grew hushed and silent, and she slept the untroubled sleep of a babe whom his mother comforteth. And so she passed through the gate of death to the Life Immortal, to the Kingdom of the God of Love.

Modern criticism looks back on domestic service in those early days as slavery, and doubtless it often was such, but our Mrs. Jane was no slave, one might say she was a tyrant in her own domain, though ruling by love and not by fear. There was in her something of the spirit of the faithful vassal of feudal times. The children, when no longer babies, were ' the young gentlemen,' and ' the young ladies.' When my brother had scarlet-fever and young maids had to be removed from risk of infection, Mrs. Jane wept to see my sisters

scrubbing bared floors, and cleaning grates. She felt that no 'young gentleman' would marry them after they had stooped to such menial tasks, and she longed to be able to do all the work herself. She was disappointed over my engagement to an Oxford Professor, for she 'had always looked forward to Miss Lea having a butler.' Service and duty were part of her religion, and this feudal attitude meant happiness and content. Her life's work was a vocation, not merely a means of earning a livelihood. I doubt if 'money' and 'hours off' ever entered into her calculations to any appreciable extent. Yet withal there was no servility in her attitude towards 'the family,' rather, it made for pride and independence, and the growth of a strong personality. She lived the good life to the last, and, loving and beloved, when her path lay through the valley of the shadow of death, she found it all flood-lit with golden memories.

SHAKESPEARE AND NICHOLAS BRETON.

BY URSULA KENTISH WRIGHT.

THERE is considerable circumstantial evidence pointing to a friendship between William Shakespeare and Nicholas Breton, and there are many indications throughout Shakespeare's plays of Breton's literary influence. The friendship between the two writers has to a great extent been neglected by Shakespearean scholars chiefly because Breton's works are so little read to-day, but he took a very prominent position in the Elizabethan literary world, and was widely read by his contemporaries. So popular were his books that one of his prose works, *A Post with a Packet of Mad Letters*, ran into eleven editions between 1602 and 1637. There are many beautiful passages in his prose book *The Miseries of Mavillia*, the story of 'the most unfortunate lady that ever lived,' which was one of the earliest examples of the novel, but it is divided into five 'miseries' in lieu of chapters. Another of Breton's most important works was *Wit's Trenchmour, A Conference Betwixt an Angler and a Scholar*, which served as a model for Isaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler*, but whereas Walton's book is a practical treatise on fishing, Breton's is chiefly metaphorical. One of his most attractive works, and the one he is best known by in the present day, is his *Fantasticks*, which consists of a series of essays describing the seasons, the months, and the hours of the day. All Breton's books abound in shrewd character sketches of men in every walk of life, combined with exquisite pen pictures of the countryside and the

everyday life of the Elizabethans. He also wrote many long poems on religious or allegorical themes and some exquisite lyrics. The principal facts pointing to a friendship between Shakespeare and Breton are that some verses addressed to Breton were signed 'W. S.'; that there are a remarkable number of identical passages in their works; and that they had mutual patrons and friends. Their common meeting ground was very probably in the house of the Countess of Pembroke, who was Sir Philip Sidney's sister and the mother of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Philip, Earl of Montgomery to whom Heminge and Condell dedicated the First Folio, in which dedication it is stated that Shakespeare received 'much favour' from them in his lifetime. Breton appears at one time to have been a member of the Countess's household; one of his poems was entitled 'The Countess of Pembroke's Passion,' and he dedicated to her 'A Pilgrimage to Paradiso with the Countess of Pembroke's Love'; 'The Ravisht Soule and the Blessed Weeper,' and a book of prayers called *Maries Exercises*. Aubrey describing the Countess's house wrote: 'In her time Wilton House was like a college, there were so many learned and ingenius persons.' In the circle at Wilton there was a connection of the family named William Herbert who was a poet and a great patron of literature. To him Breton dedicated his 'Wit's Trenchmour' in 1597—'To the right Worshipful and noble minded, the favorer of learning and nourisher of vertue, William Harbert of the Red Castle¹ in Mountgombryshiere, Esquire,' and he is shown to be a well-known patron of literature in these words: 'I have often heard of the nobleness of your own spirit, as well in regard of the learned, as favourer of the virtuous.'

¹ Now Powis Castle.

It is quite probable that this William Herbert was the same 'Mr. W. H.' to whom Shakespeare dedicated his sonnets. I suggested this possibility in a paper on Nicholas Breton which I read to the Elizabethan Literary Society in 1927, the same idea occurred to an American, Mr. Ulric Nesbit who has made extensive researches into the life and family of Mr. William Herbert (later Sir William), and set out a very convincing case in a book published in 1936 called *The Onlie Begetter*. William Herbert's age fits in with the noble youth of the sonnets, he was born in 1572 so he would have been twenty-six years old in 1598 when we have the first record of the sonnets in Francis Mere's *Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury*, in which he mentions 'mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare' and his 'sugred sonnets among his private friends.' Herbert's father died in 1594 which date fits in with the line in Sonnet 13: 'You *had* a father: let your son say so.'

In Sonnets 78 to 86 a rival poet is mentioned who has supplanted Shakespeare in his Patron's esteem, and it is very likely that this poet was Breton, although some scholars have accepted the theory that it was Chapman.

In Breton's poems entitled *Melancholic Humours* there is this verse called 'An Odd Conceit,' which Shakespeare was apparently quoting in Sonnet 105.

*Lovely kind, and kindly loving,
Such a mind were worth the moving:
Truly fair, and fairly true,
Where are all these, but in you?*

*Wisely kind, and kindly wise,
Blessed life, where such love lies:
Wise, and kind, and fair, and true,
Lovely live all these in you.*

*Sweetly dear, and dearly sweet,
Blessed, where these blessings meet :
Sweet, fair, wise, kind, blessed, true,
Blessed be all these in you.*

In the sonnet we have 'Fair, kind and true' printed as a quotation.

*'Fair, kind, and true,' is all my argument,
'Fair, kind, and true,' varying to other words ;
And in this change is my invention spent,
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.
'Fair, kind, and true,' have often lived alone,
Which three till now never kept seat in one.*

Unfortunately we have no definite proof that Mr. William Herbert and 'Mr. W. H.' were identical, though the case is a strong one. No writer has suffered more than Shakespeare from zealous scholars who have read meanings into his works—in particular the sonnets—and have attributed motives to him which had no foundation or likelihood, but were merely creations of their own highly imaginative brains. The most ludicrous of these suppositions, which I have come across, was brought forward by a learned German who interpreted the dedication of the sonnets 'To the onelie begetter of these ensuing sonnets Mr. W. H.' as 'Mr. William Himself'; to him it seemed perfectly obvious that W stood for William, H for Himself!

Shakespeare and Breton were friends of Ben Jonson's who wrote verses eulogising both writers, those to Breton were printed before his poems *Melancholic Humours*. John Florio too was a friend of Breton's to whom he dedicated, in affectionate terms, 'A Merry Dialogue Betwixt the Taker and Mistaker,'¹ addressing him as 'my very loving and

¹ This dedication was prefixed to the edition of 1603, the same year in which Florio's translation of Montaigne was printed.

approved friend.' Shakespeare was evidently familiar with Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essays* and borrowed from this book in *The Tempest*.

The strongest piece of circumstantial evidence of a friendship between Shakespeare and Breton is the laudatory poem signed 'W. S.' at the beginning of Breton's book *The Wit of Wit, Wits Will or Wils Wit*. This was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1580, but there is no extant copy of this date. It was again printed in 1596 and 1597, but the earliest copy at the British Museum and the one which contains these verses is dated 1599, and the probability is that they were especially written for the new edition.

AD LECTOREM, DE AUTHORE

*What shall I say of gold more than 'tis gold ;
Or call the diamond more than precious ;
Or praise the man, with praises manifold,
When of himselfe, is virtuous ?
Wit is but Wit, yet such his Wit and Will,¹
As proves ill good, or makes good to be ill.*

*Why ? What his Wit ? proceede and aske his Will ;
Why ? what his Will ? read on, and learne of Wit ;
Both good, I gesse, yet each a several ill ;
This may seem strange to those that heare of it ;
Nay, nere a whit, for vertue many waies
Is made a vice, yet Vertue hath her praise.*

*Wherefore, O Breton, worthie is thy worke
Of commendations worthie to be worth ;
Sith captious wittes in every corner lurke,
A bold attempt it is to set them forth,
A forme of Wit, and that of such a sort
As none offends, for all is said in sport.*

¹ Compare Sonnets 135, 136 and 143, with the punning on the name 'Will.'

*And such a sport as serves for other kinds,
Both young and old, for learning, armes and love ;
For ladies' humors, mirth and mone he finds,
With some extreames their patient mindes to prove ;
Well Breton, write in hand, thou has the thing
As, when it comes, love, wealth, and fame will bring.*

It is interesting to compare the first lines of the poem with *King John*, Act iv, Scene ii :

*To guard a title that was rich before,
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet.*

The date of *King John* is approximately 1598, and the verses to Breton were published a year later. *The Will of Wit* is an allegory written in the form of a dialogue between two characters named Wit and Will. It is alluded to several times in *As You Like It*, written about 1599.

Will of Wit : Wit ? Whither away ?

As You Like It : I, ii. How now, wit ! whither wander you ? *Id.* iv, i. Wit, whither wilt ?

Will of Wit : Mountains never meet, but friends often.

As You Like It : III, ii. Lord ! it is a hard matter for friends to meet ; but mountains may be removed by earthquakes and so encounter.

Will of Wit : A man is a man, if he have but a house on his head.

As You Like It : iv, i. *Ros* : I had as lief be wooed of a snail.

Orl : Of a snail ?

Ros : Ay, of a snail ; for though he comes slowly he carries his house on his head.

The discussion between Touchstone and Corin in Act III, Scene ii, was evidently suggested by another book of Breton's,

The Court and the Country, which consists of a dialogue between a courtier and a countryman upon the respective merits of life at court and in the country. In the same book is a story which I think Shakespeare is referring to in Hamlet's famous line 'twas caviare to the general.' The Countryman is very scornful of Courtiers' food and says: 'Now for your dishes of meat, I will tell you, I heard my father once report it for a truth, that a great man who lived where you live, sent him for a great dainty a Porpoise Pie or two cold,' then the Master offered a piece of the pie to his wife, his children, his servants, his dog, and the miller and his dog, but each one in turn spat it out.

'This was one of your fine dishes. Another a great Lady sent him, which was a little Barrell of Caviary, which was no sooner opened and tasted, but quickly made up againe, was sent backe with this message, "Commend me to my good Lady, and thanke her honour, and tell her we have blacke Sope enough already but if it be any better thing, I beseech her Ladyship to bestow it upon a better friend, that can better tell how to use it."'

The number of similar lines are too numerous to give in full, so I have selected the most striking passages. Breton's prose has much the same quality as that of *As You Like It*, and must be read aloud to be fully appreciated as he was a master in blending vowel sounds, the beauty of which he learnt from the Italian language with which he was very familiar.

In *The Miseries of Mavillia* the heroine describes an old man who comes wooing her in words which are almost identical with Shakespeare's poem 'Crabbed Age and Youth,' from *The Passionate Pilgrim*.¹

¹ Compare also Deloney's *Garland of Goodwill*.

Mavillia says :

‘ To me comes my old doting lover, a rich chuff in the country, who having lately buried his old Joan, would fain play the young gentleman with me. But no, it would not be, contraries can never agree : age is froward and youth foolish : age is lame, and youth lustic : age is sickly, youth healthful : age is melancholie, and youth merry : age is modest, youth mad : age is towards death, and youth looks for life : age is jealous, that cannot youth away withal. How then, is it likely that we two should agree hardly, yet I can do little if I cannot speak him fair, give him good words, and let him go.’

Shakespeare transforms this prose into one of his most enchanting lyrics ; transposing the words, he endows them with a musical lilt and warmth of expression which is incomparably lovely.

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH.

*Crabbed age and youth cannot live together ;
 Youth is full of pleasance, age is full of care ;
 Youth like summer morn, age like winter weather ;
 Youth like summer brave, age like winter bare.
 Youth is full of sport, age's breath is short ;
 Youth is nimble, age is lame ;
 Youth is hot and bold, age is weak and cold ;
 Youth is wild, and age is tame.
 Age, I do abhor thee ; youth, I do adore thee ;
 O, my love, my love is young !
 Age, I do defy thee : O, sweet shepherd, hie thee,
 For methinks thou stay'st too long.*

In ‘ A Post with a Packet of Mad Letters ’ there is ‘ A Letter of Advice to a Young Courtier,’ which it is interesting to compare with Polonius’s advice to Laertes in *Hamlet*,

Act I, Scene i, and the Countess's advice to Bertram in *All's Well That Ends Well*, Act I, Scene iii. Breton's letter runs thus :

'My Noble Cousin, I hear you are of late grown a great Courtier, I wish you much grace, and the continuing of your best comfort : but, for that your years have not had time to see much, and your kindness may hap to be abused let me entreat you a little now and then to look to that which I counsel you : keep your purse warily, and your credit charily, your reputation valiantly, and your honour carefully : for your friends as you find them use them : for your enemies fear them not, but look to them : for your love, let it be secret in the bestowing and discreet in the placing : for if fancy be wanton, wit will be a fool : scorn not ladies, for they are worthy to be loved : but make not love to many, lest thou be loved of none : If thou hast a favour, be not proud of thy fortune, but think it discretion to conceal a contentment : go neat, but not gay, lest it argue a lightness, and take heed of lavish expense, lest it beggar thy state : play little, and lose not much, use exercise, but make no toil of pleasure : read much, but dull not thy brain, and confer but with the wise, so shalt thou get understanding. Pride is a kind of coyness, which is a little too womanish : and common familiarity is too near the Clown for a Courtier. But carry thyself even, that thou fall on neither side ; so will the wise commend thee and the better sort affect thee : but let me not be tedious, lest it may perhaps offend thee : and therefore as I live, let it suffice I love thee, and so wishing thee as much good as thou canst desire to be wished, in prayer for the health and hope of thy happiness, to my utmost power I rest in affectionate good will. Thine ever assured H. L.'

This is the same excellent advice that Polonius gives Laertes.

Lyly's 'Euphues' contains an almost identical passage in prose, as there were no copyright laws the Elizabethans freely indulged in plagiarism which often led to violent

quarrels and the writing of abusive pamphlets. There is another remarkable simile in Breton's book *The Scholar and the Soldier*, a philosophical discourse between these two characters as to which is the finest profession. The Scholar's speech on 'honour' resembles Falstaff's speech before the battle of Shrewsbury in *Henry the Fourth*, Part I, Act v, Scene i.

'Honour, that is a thing greatly sought, little found, and much made account of, not for the Vertue of the substance it carrieth with it : but for the Majestie of the matter, which in substance is nothing, it purchaseth to the person Honourable reverence of his Inferiours, familiaritie with the Nobilitie, and favour of the Soveraigntie. Now there are divers honours, one Honour is gotten by Riches, which is a thing nothing durable : of nothing growes nothing, then Riches decayed, dies the Honour, then that Honour is nothing, in that it is a Riches nothing durable.

'Another Honour is got by valiancie, and that is in Warre, whereby the Captaine winneth the Armes, that after during life, he to his honour, and after him his posteritie, to his and their honour, do honourably beare : yet for all this, well considered, it is nothing, for that is not certaine : for that in Warres to day is got, that to-morrow is lost : to day he gets an Ensigne, that to-morrow looseth his owne Armes, body and all : if hee come home well with his victorie, yet Virtutis comes invidia : Hee that did clime by Vertue may be overthrowne by villainie : . . . then this honour, I see likewise is the nothing, that is nothing durable. But leaving this, there is now another Honour, got by Learning . . . By Learning comes Wisdome, by Learning ill used comes folly : by Learning comes Fame : by learning comes favour of the highest : by learning comes all goodnesse : by Learning comes that honour, that longest dooth endure : for after death, Fame of Learning is an honour to the person dead : and yet that Honour is nothing durable . . . If then Fame bee the chiefe Honour of the learned, which, well considered, is neither any thing in substaunce, nor

yet durable : then this Honour (though many wayes something) yet in some it is nothing.'

Falstaff soliloquises—

'Well 'tis no matter ; honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off when I come on ? how then ? Can honour set to a leg ? No. Or an arm ? No. Or take away the grief of a wound ? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery, then ? No. What is honour ? A word. What is in that word, honour ? What is in that honour ? Air. A trim reckoning !—Who hath it ? He that died o' *Wednesday*. Doth he feel it ? No. Doth he hear it ? No. It is insensible, then ? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living ? No. Why ? Detraction will not suffer it :—therefore, I'll none of it : honour is a mere scutcheon, and so ends my catechism.'

One cannot study Breton with Shakespeare without being impressed by the feeling of an intimate friendship which is consciously and unconsciously mirrored in their writings, in comparing the dates of their works it appears that they interchanged ideas, but one must always bear in mind that Breton was many years older than Shakespeare, and in some instances they both may have borrowed from an earlier source. Both writers have the same blythe sweet spirit, the purity of ideals, the strict moral tone, the wide knowledge of the country and love of rural delights, they echo in their poetry the sound of the birds and the beasts, the wind and the sea. It is this idyllic pastoral literature of the Elizabethans together with their joyous music which makes us talk glibly of 'Merry England,' and we are apt to lose sight of the fact that England was engaged in wars during most of Elizabeth's reign. Certainly the number of casualties was most remarkably small, and with no newspapers or wireless to bring the horrors of war and the inquisition into every home, the people on the whole

would not be touched by gruesome details as we are to-day ; and it was no doubt easier to be light-hearted when the large towns abounded in green meadows, and the houses, even in the heart of the City of London, had spacious gardens and orchards. When one remembers that only thirty years ago there were no motor-cars in Stratford-on-Avon one realises how almost impossible it is for us to visualise England as it was in Shakespeare's day.

‘RECOLLECTED IN TRANQUILLITY.’

*I vainly searched for words that you might know
How yesterday, at sunset, day and night
Hushed suddenly to rapture at the sight
Each of the other's graces, for a slow
Rich moment ceased to breathe ; so urgent then
It seemed that you should understand how still,
How live, above the blue and brooding hill
One star-flame flickered, paled, and lived again.*

*But words, remembering beauty, are but miles
To measure moonlight, or a net to keep
The secret of the red sun's loveliness.
Therefore, I'll hold my peace ; for loves, dreams, smiles
(Oft turned to stone in telling) safest sleep
In wordless, undisturbed heart's quietness.*

MADELEINE WALKER.

'NOT A-ZACKLY.'

BY C. C. VYVYAN.

It is a very puzzling matter, this question of the 'not a-zackly' ones. In Cornwall there are quite a number of us who are 'not a-zackly.' There is something in the air of the peninsula that breeds and fosters people who are known among their friends as 'characters' and among their antagonists as 'freaks,' and these are found in every walk of life but most frequently among quite homely people in small villages and towns. Usually they are treated with kindness and tolerance and sometimes with something of the pride of civic ownership.

There is, for instance, William. He has no surname; to all the surrounding country he is just William of Trewhinnard who goes around with the Trewhinnard Brass Band. Undersized but radiant, of quite uncertain age, with cap tilted sideways, trousers sagging, mouth spread from one ear to the other as if in life he had found no purpose but the achievement and maintenance of a grin, he parades behind the band as a hanger-on at every fête and festival. What stage of musical development he has attained no one knows. He beats time with his hand to the drum while he shuffles along as if the music were a star to which he is bound to hitch his wagon, but it is clear from his appearance that the brazen melodies mean fullness of life and ecstasy to him.

Up and down the county there are many people, young and old, who look out on the world with the half-vacant

smile of William of Trehinnard and it is the question of their place and meaning in what Omar calls 'this sorry scheme of things entire' that is such a very puzzling one.

Why, you ask, should the existence of such people constitute a problem? Why worry about the matter at all? Here are we, plain folk, sane folk, who know what's what and who's who, and there (poor things) are the nit-wits who cannot fend for themselves. But that is just it. Perhaps there is too much fending in the plain man's life, perhaps, if truth were known and stated, we should understand that the nit-wits or the half-wits after all have found the better way. A shadow of this truth is thrown by the often-quoted text about those mouths of the babes and sucklings, mouths out of which the praise of God was perfected; and also by the custom, in Ireland, of giving reverence and protection to idiots because they come from God, and by the veneration felt for them in Brittany where they bear the beautiful name of 'Les Innocents.'

Whatever we may think and feel about the feeble-minded, this fact is indisputable; the mystic path of contemplation, involving stillness of the busy mind that is normally kept rotating by the pressure of things seen, leads, as preliminary phase of the quest, to a state of intellectual vacuity achieved continuously and without an effort by those who are 'not a-zackly.' So then, the mockers will say at this point, you couple idiots and mystics? No. Not when ultimate issues are considered. But the fact remains that the simple-minded being does present, by his very limitations, a planed surface ready for illumination, a surface that brighter people can only attain by the strenuous effort of discarding habitual mental activities. Whether the illumination is ever given to such beings is quite another question, and probably an insoluble one, for the nit-wit has not any power of digesting

and recording his experience. Then, if you can never prove your case, the mockers will ask, why state it?

Simply because one may see now and then, in the eyes and smiles of those who are 'not a-zackly,' a reflection of that Truth which may never be ensnared by mortal disputation. Such a smile have I seen assuredly on the face of William Trehinnard, a smile that is password to regions fairer than any haunt of earthly birds and earthly flowers. Such a smile we saw in our childhood days each time that we encountered Short-Petticoat-Jane whose work was milking cows and 'maiting' pigs on Trebolsue farm.

I can see her now, a swill-bucket in each hand, wearing large stout boots and short stout skirt of home-spun, tightly-bodiced with a crotchet shawl about her skinny frame. Her eyes were dark as sloes and her mouth was but a slit in her weather-beaten face. That mouth was always smiling, yet you could hardly call it a smile, the expression of happiness on that brown and wrinkled face was transmuted, by the very nature of her calling and her personality and her features, into a grimace. To us, as children, there was something a little sinister about that smiling mouth and about the unbroken silence that she kept through all the years we knew her and about the strange dark look in her eyes and the purposeful walk with which she carried buckets through the mud. For Trebolsue was always muddy; it lay in a hollow, collecting and retaining the water from every surrounding eminence. Frogs bred in the wayside pool, the thatch of the roof turned green, each entrance to the pig-styes was only high enough for a gnome, one year's slime, in the yard, would be always mingled with the next, but Short-Petticoat-Jane never faltered in her work nor in her cheerfulness.

With neither home nor relatives, the workhouse having

been father and mother both to her, with a pittance for her wages, with not much of a past to boast about and very little future to hope for, she had her own inner kingdom of cheerfulness, unlit by any fuel of intelligence, not fed by any widening of interests. Whether, in her own individual dream-Paradise, she would still be maiting pigs, we cannot say ; we only know that within her dark eyes there was always lurking some secret happiness, a secret that we could not fathom and we might not share.

Of course there are many other Cornish half-wits who do not habitually wear a smile like William of Trewhinnard and Jane of Trebolsue, but nearly every one of them is exempt, in some inexplicable fashion, from the carking cares of our work-a-day world ; it is as if their minds were not attuned to register such cares, just as the mind of a child is not concerned with providing the wherewithal of life to-day or securing the income of to-morrow. This freedom it is, no doubt, that gives to some a smile of happiness and to others an air of innocence, while even those who are not happy will betray now and then, by a chance word or look or by some peculiar action, their independence of values that fetter us and our fellows, turning us into herded automats, and will betray also their cognizance of a world where poets, children, madmen and disembodied spirits may forgather.

A long succession of these distinctive Cornish people comes back to memory.

There were three sisters living in a villa ; they were a little above the labouring class in station and a little below those neighbours with whom they would willingly have associated, so that they lived in rather a solitary manner. One was totally crippled, one was very rheumatic and the third was blind. All of them were a little strange, but the

third one was admitted to be 'not a-zackly,' and it was well known that if you pressed with your thumb a certain spot on her head she would go round and round like a teetotum. She lived her twilight life in a region of unnatural fears and thoughts among robbers and dark threats and shapes of evil round the corner and wandering gypsies and violence and cunning, and her talk was a curious jumble of all this, though now and then a gleam of beauty would be shot across the incoherence.

To listen to her was to wander in a world of restless apprehension akin to nightmare, but once she told me of a gypsy hymn and a gypsy pledge that she had overheard in last night's dream and as she chanted these words in a deep, rather croaking voice, rolling her sightless eyes about in uncanny fashion, I had a swift and fleeting apprehension how madness may be akin to poetry.

GYPSY PLEDGE OF LOYALTY TO EACH OTHER.

*Here in the Eye of the great God who, unseen, seeth me, I
pledge myself to be true to my brothers and sisters, wherever I
wander, wherever I find them, at sunset and sunrise, in wood or
in city, in street or in desert, by land or water, at morning and
midnight.*

GYPSY HYMN.

*Deep, deep, sing the song of Sleep
To the God who rests in the shade ;
Peace, peace, let labour cease
When the sun to rest is laid.*

*Far, far, keep Death's pale Star,
For his sleep is not of death ;
Death comes not nigh to the sleeping sky
But holds his grave-bound breath.*

*Hush, hush, cease the Winds their rush,
Be still, O Land and Sea.
Great God asleep in the woods so deep
And the Winds return to thee.*

*When the morning brake then the Voice doth spake
And the Sun again shall rise,
In the morning dew comes the saying true,
'He sleeps but never dies.'*

It is obvious that, as literature, these dream-pieces will not bear dissection; the thoughts are only half-thoughts disconnected, the grammar is uncertain and the rhythm halts. Yet who can dare to dismiss them as nonsense, or indeed who can dare to classify as sense or nonsense, just as one classifies sheep and goats or separates black from white, any utterance of the human mind that is seeking for reality?

Athwart our jumbled, half-articulate conceptions, beneath our halting, ill-adjusted language, the lowest among us may perceive and transmit his own glimpses of eternity.

*Great God asleep in the woods so deep,
And the Winds return to thee.*

But the neighbours only knew her as one who went round and round in circles at the pressure of a thumb.

Then there was the temporary cook, a finished and efficient chef who gave satisfaction to her various employers except once a month, when she would change completely with the waxing of the moon. A day or two before full moon she would turn queer and sometimes, which was worse, she would 'turn ugly' and threaten her mistress or her fellow-servants with the carving-knife. She wandered from one situation to another until there came a time when her habits were so well known in the county that she could not find another post. 'Mad' they would say. 'Dangerous'

they would say. 'Out of the question' they would say. And of course they were right. The carving knife was undoubtedly a risk to their everyday security. But no one gave her any understanding ; no one perceived that she was subject to some cosmic law far stronger than our little human standards of good and bad behaviour.

There was also the little old lady, four-foot nothing and very loquacious, who would come to see us once in every year or two with a long, long story. Always it would be a story about a grave and flowers that she needed urgently, sometimes it would be a sister's or a brother's grave, some very dear relation just departed, and sometimes it would be the grave of a little niece, but we knew that she had no relations and that this story of the newly-made grave was always prelude to a solitary journey that she would make on her own account to the County Mental Asylum. There she would sojourn for a while and then she would return to her little cottage and live in peace until the thought of another newly made grave came thrusting itself into the forefront of her consciousness.

Possibly among the 'not a-zackly' folk one should reckon that late-lamented Vicar who, every Christmas, presented to each bed-lier in his parish either a top-hat or a complete china dinner-service. It was his daughter's privilege to retrieve these misplaced benefactions and thus the Vicar was always able, year after year, to renew his largesse. There was also that other cleric who invariably slept by day and visited his parishioners by night ; and yet a third who discouraged all his flock from attending church and ensured his own solitude by keeping wolf-hounds and erecting barbed-wire entanglements all about the vicarage ; no tradesman nor caller might enter that garden or that house but a plate of tin was nailed upon the

gate and a stick was placed near by, and with this impromptu drum an urgent summons might be issued to the solitary parson within his lair.

But these, and such as these, although they seem to find a natural home and protective colouring in the Cornish villages, do in fact represent psychological puzzles of a rather complicated nature and they are not quite in line with those other folks who live out their simple lives in a state of irresponsibility.

There are also the half-wits of the open road. It may be that you never have exchanged a greeting with any one of them but, if you are accustomed to go to and fro about the county, you will find them in certain places, familiar, but not stationary, as milestones.

Up and down one solitary lane the Lady with the toque perambulates alone ; year in, year out ; day after day ; always between two and six o'clock in the afternoon. Her bearing is erect and her toes are carefully turned out, her shortish skirt hangs stiffly as a bell away from her person, her clothes are sound and tidy, always fawn in colour. A toque of late Victorian cut is neatly placed on her head ; she never carries basket or umbrella and her gloved hands hang always idly at her sides as she walks on with never a glance to right or left, with deliberate but unpurposeful steps like the steps of a sleep-walker.

Seen from behind she appears to be just a lady of extreme propriety taking a walk, but suddenly, just as you are overtaking her in your car, a strange thing will happen. The first time it occurs you will swerve violently towards the hedge and in future encounters you will nerve yourself, as for an expected jolt or collision ; but you never lose the sense of shock, for it is just as if on the surface of some placid pond the waters cleft asunder in a moment, to rear

themselves up in two billows and then to sink again into glassy stillness ; or as if you were watching the face of some benevolent dignitary who suddenly, without warning or provocation, put his finger slyly to his nose. For the Lady with the toque, never pausing in her onward walk, will swiftly throw up both arms to heaven in a rigid gesture of despair or threat or mockery.

And that is all.

On a more frequented road in the outskirts of a town there stands a hoarding for advertisements and beside it there is always hovering a middle-aged woman, slightly bearded, with a very battered picture hat on her head, paste-pot in one hand, brushes in the other. Even when she is not sticking bills she keeps her station there, as if she were the guardian of a temple, and if you speak to her and look into her eyes you know that she is seeing things which you either cannot or may not see. It is generally believed that she sleeps in her hat with the paste-pot for a pillow and the brushes close beside her. Whatever her inmost thoughts may be, she has in this life found no expression for them, except in the alternating acts of sticking up or tearing down of bills.

Further, there is the idiot boy, or rather man, for he is long ago turned forty, who fishes on dry land. His home stands high on the north-east corner of the crossing of four roads and his garden is raised above the traffic by a six-foot bank. He stands, day after day and year after year, upon that garden bank, with a ten-foot bamboo pole clasped in both hands, with never a hook nor bait to expedite his efforts, fishing vainly, fishing hopefully in the stream of human traffic that trickles by. Sometimes he will emerge and parade up and down one of the roads, with the fishing-rod raised skyward, pressed against his body. He wears his cap awry and is always clad in ragged coat and long breeches

that flap unbuttoned about his calves, breeches that never yet have known the climax of a pair of gaiters.

All these tales are culled, in rather random fashion, from the memory of my one generation, but the queer people involved can trace a line of spiritual descent from characters well known in the byways of Cornish history, being allied more or less in their outlook on life to the wandering minstrels and preachers and itinerant idlers of olden days, to Wing Tom Fang and Big-headed Charlie and Henna Quick and little Dick Hampton and many another.

Perhaps it is part of our Celtic heritage that the population should have a smaller share than the usual one of folks completely sane and normal. Perhaps our angular small county, full of nooks and sequestered coves and isolated hamlets, does naturally attract, develop and foster people who are also full of unexpected nooks and angles. At any rate if we look about us and also behind us into the history and legends of the county, we shall see a long procession of people ranging from the border-land of the peculiar and the whimsical to the beyond-the-border-land of the 'not a-zackly'; people dependent largely on the kindness and the rationality of others for providing them with the necessities of life; people who have seldom any recognition that life is attended by any urgent necessities, because they will travel serenely from the cradle to the coffin, looking out all through that journey on our daily tragedies and comedies as on some flat-dimensioned picture-show, looking at our daily world with eyes but half——

No; they are not half-awakened eyes, for the simple-minded ones are surely looking out beyond the bars of rationality on other worlds, it may be fairer worlds, than the one in which we, with all our garnered wisdom, are imprisoned.

THE TWO ELIZABETHS

BY JAMES TURLE.

It has been said, and truly, that every village in England has had some share in the making of England, and in English history.

Much of this is known, the names of many villages are familiar to most of us, because of some event that took place long ago.

Not villages alone : open heaths, forests, rivers, marshes, have become famous in association with well-known characters, with battles, treaties, or episodes in our country's past—Senlac, the New Forest, the Medway, Sedgemoor, one could write so many.

Others again are so closely allied to legend that whenever the name of such a spot comes before us we immediately recall the old story of long ago—the Isle of Athelney, Glastonbury, the Isle of Ely, to name but three, are mingled with thoughts of King Alfred, St. Joseph of Arimathea and Hereward the Wake.

Of every such place we have been told, not only what the King or Queen, or famous one did, but why they did it, or indeed what they failed to do.

Runnymede, Lyme, Wedmore . . . you can read it all.

Consider all the places that Queen Elizabeth slept in : you can learn why she was in this or that place, why she was on that journey : for what purpose she went to Tilbury, to Deptford. Why she went to Rochester, and for what reason the house called Satis in that town received its name.

And yet, in spite of all this, I have found a small village where the people are proud to tell you what she did there, and yet cannot tell you why. Nobody knows. We know why she came to this village—because she was on her way to Rye and Winchelsea. We know, indeed, why she halted there—because it was time for her midday meal, and the day being warm, she saw beside the highway a pleasing stretch of green, well shaded by a mighty oak. There she rested and, later, was graciously pleased to step across the road to honour the family who lived in the old timbered house with her presence.

Yes, all this we know. The name of that family was Bishopp, and they went on living in that old house—you can see it to-day just as the Queen saw it—for more than two hundred years.

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And now, in case you do not know this spot (which was much loved by Drayton) I will tell you what happened there.

This is no secret. You can read it in books, not perhaps in many books, but you can certainly read about it in one book, written by a descendant of the family of Frewen who flourished in the days of Elizabeth. Flourished exceedingly, and in due course the Frewens became owners of that famous estate and lovely old country house called Brickwall, in the village of which I write, and whose descendants live in the same parish to this day. And in this book you will read that after the great Queen had continued her journey along the road to Rye and Winchelsea, it was found that she had left, beneath the oak, a pair of shoes, the shoes she had been wearing. I am not certain, but I believe that these shoes are, or were until quite lately, still to be seen at the ancient house of the

Frewens at Brickwall. They were left on that green nearly four hundred years ago.

The old oak is still standing, aged and a little infirm, perhaps, but standing yet, close to the old church and the old Tudor house and just a little walk of a hundred yards or so past the village pump to the Six Bells Inn.

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Beyond the village, and on the hill that overlooks the valley of the Rother—where at evening the sun shows up the tower of Wittersham Church, standing as guardian of the Isle of Oxney—is an ancient mill. No longer working, but looking towards the hills above Battle, and standing but a few yards from the old home of the millers who worked that mill for many generations. You can come down from that old house, and through the village, of which every house has at least one crooked chimney, pass by one cottage which must surely be the smallest in England, and so to the Oak, Queen Elizabeth's Oak.

Many times last summer I, too, passed that way, from the old mill house where I was staying. And every time I thought of the great Queen, and of the pair of shoes she left upon the short turf. And then, just as summer drew to its close, and the wild wet days of October's end made us think of winter's coming, I passed that way once more. The gales had gone, the sun was shining and the grass upon the green was bright and fresh as on any day in May. And there, side by side, carefully placed beneath the tree, were a pair of shoes, not of a Queen, perhaps, but a woman's shoes for all that. Small, and worn as if by much walking, but dainty of shape and with something of their earlier smartness. Very thin, and of little protection to the wearer, but shoes still.

And so I went upon my way, wondering who could have placed them there.

Over a stile, along a path beside a wood, across two pole-stripped hop gardens, through a little wood, another stile, a lane or two and so once again to the broad road, four or maybe five miles nearer the ancient town of Rye.

And here beside the road, upon a stretch of grass, I came upon a little company of wayfarers. Two men, I think there were, three women, some little girls, a boy or two, little children and babies. Two old travelling carts, horses, a pony and dogs. Gypsies? Yes, I think so, all, perhaps, except one girl who was standing alone, bathing the eyes of the pony with a wet rag and a tin of water, driving away the worrying flies.

And as I passed, I noticed that the boys and girls had no shoes and no stockings, and that the women wore men's boots . . . all except the girl with the pony, who had bare legs it is true, but very neat and very small shoes.

The day was hot, hot as summer, the men sat by the side of the road, smoking, the women were preparing some meal, and the children came running round for pennies.

I stopped and spoke to the girl with the pony. Yes, I think she was a gypsy, but neater than most, a pretty girl with rather small, delicately defined features, and very pleasing eyes. We talked of the pony, of the children, and . . .

'Don't they get their feet blistered,' I asked, 'running about without any shoes?'

'No,' she said. 'I didn't wear shoes until I was grown up. I'm nearly fifteen.'

'Well,' I went on, 'you've got a very nice pair now.'

She smiled, looked down at her shoes and then up again at me with those wonderful eyes.

‘They’re just a bit tight for me,’ she said, ‘but maybe they’ll get a bit easier in a day or two.’

‘Yes,’ I agreed, ‘new shoes always want a little breaking in.’

‘They aren’t quite new,’ she smiled, ‘only had them a day, a real lady give them to me yesterday, a real lady she was, and pretty too.’

One of the older women had joined us by now, the children were still clamouring for pennies, the pony was making his dinner from the grass by the roadside, free at last from the worry of flies.

‘A trifle for the gypsy’s baby,’ she began; ‘it’s a long road we’re going, gentleman. A piece of silver for your fortune, and you with a lucky face, kind gentleman!’

‘Listen,’ I said, ‘just for once I want to tell you a story instead, I will tell you what you’ve done. You have come along this road a long way, you came over the bridge by the river, past the old oak and the Six Bells, haven’t you? Yes, I know you have; well, did you ever hear the story of the great Queen, and how she left something under that old oak tree, hundreds of years ago?’

‘No, we never,’ said the girl, ‘did we, Auntie?’

‘Well,’ I said, ‘I will tell you,’ and I told them of Queen Elizabeth, of how she had stopped there. ‘And what do you think she left?’ I asked. ‘No, you will never guess, but she left the same as you did, yesterday, or was it this morning early?’

‘What, old shoes?’ she asked.

‘Yes,’ I agreed, ‘a pair of shoes, that is what the Queen left, under the oak, but nobody knows why. Why did you leave yours?’

She smiled, and caught one of the smallest toddlers, who was clamouring louder than ever.

'I thought,' she said slowly, 'as someone might come along as wanted a pair, some poor girl as maybe hadn't got no shoes at all. I'd seen one yesterday as hadn't got no shoes.'

'There,' said I, 'now I know why the Queen left hers, and here's a little piece of silver for the gypsy's baby, and good-bye!'

Pennies for the children, and so back along the road again.

Someone running.

'What was her name, the Queen's name?' she asked.

'Elizabeth,' I answered, 'and yours?'

'Why, the same as hers'—her dark eyes shining more than ever—'Elizabeth. Fancy two Elizabeths! But mostly I'm called Bess, reckon she were never called that, was she? Not Bess—not Queen Bess?'

'Yes she was,' I said, 'Good Queen Bess.'

'Fancy that now,' she smiled, delightedly. 'I'm glad I left the shoes.'

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The last little gleam of autumn sunshine was saying good night to the old oak, as I passed that way once more. Great clouds seemed to be rising up from westward beneath the setting sun, the village was deserted; the old oak stood just as I had always seen it, but the rays of the sun seemed to give it a little smile of friendliness. Otherwise everything was as it had looked that morning, except for one thing . . . the shoes had disappeared.

I looked across to the old Tudor house, I thought of the great Queen, and of the gypsy girl . . . 'The two Elizabeths,' I said,

‘BLOOD SPORTS AND HYPOCRISY’:

A REPLY.

To the Editor of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

SIR,

I have read with the very greatest pleasure so many of Major Jarvis’ contributions on sporting subjects both to the CORNHILL MAGAZINE and also to BLACKWOOD’S that it came as something of a surprise to me to find myself not altogether in agreement with his article on ‘Blood Sports and Hypocrisy’ in your March issue.

I have enjoyed hunting since the war and I do not think that the attitude of the post-war generation is that ‘what is more the fox, stag or hare enjoys it as much as anyone.’ All of us who think about the matter at all realise that hunting must entail suffering for the quarry, but we feel that it would suffer also were it to be shot, trapped or poisoned as happens to rats and rabbits and other wild vermin.

The charge against hunting people, then, is surely not so much that they cause extra cruelty by their sport, as that by making a sport at all of the destruction of certain wild animals, which could more efficiently but not less cruelly be destroyed by trap, by poison or by gun, they are brutalising themselves. Very few of those in the hunting field, however, derive their pleasure from seeing the hounds kill their fox. They wish to be ‘in at the death,’ because that is proof that they have ridden well themselves; and the sport to the majority is to be able by their own skill and endurance to follow where the fox and hounds lead.

In the case of covert shooting too, no reasonable person can deny that suffering is caused to the wounded birds; but in this case

also the sportsman derives his pleasure from his own quickness of eye and skill in handling his gun rather than from witnessing the death of his game. A clumsy shot, who wounds an undue proportion* of his birds is not likely to get many invitations to big covert shoots.

I have never taken part in nor ever witnessed a coursing meeting so I will not attempt to discuss the element of cruelty in coursing.

I have never taken part in nor even witnessed a cock fight, either, so I will try to base my remarks entirely on what Major Jarvis himself tells us in his own article.

He tells us that 'Nature for some reason known only to herself has designed the game-cock for one purpose and one purpose only, fighting,' but surely the fact is that it is man who in the course of centuries has by selective breeding brought the game-cock to this pitch. I think Major Jarvis really recognises this, when he says that 'the great majority of the cock-fighting fraternity are far more interested in the breeding, crossing of recognised strains, and training than in the actual main.'

Major Jarvis asks us to compare the brutality of a cock-fight with that of a professional boxing match, but, after all, the old-fashioned prize-fight was—I think I am right in saying—just as illegal as cock-fighting is to-day. The present fights are of limited duration and very carefully supervised, the contestants have to wear regulation gloves and if the fight is too uneven it is stopped by the referee.

Again the boxers are not gladiators kept for the sole purpose of fighting in public. They choose their own career for their own pecuniary advantage, and when they retire may hope for a long and useful life as licensees of public-houses, or attendants at billiard saloons or other places of entertainment where chuckers-out may be needed.

I wonder whether the two forms of cruelty 'terror caused' and 'agony inflicted' are always dissociated.

The hunted fox may suffer from terror just as the rabbit hunted by a stoat undoubtedly suffers from terror ; but at least if he is caught by the hounds he is quickly killed and if he escapes them he escapes without suffering any physical agony.

The driven pheasant, if wounded, may suffer physical agony, but I doubt if he is afflicted with much anticipatory terror.

An animal or bird, however, if placed in a confined space with an adversary, who proves stronger than himself, will surely first have agony inflicted on him and then terror caused to him as he struggles, however gamely, against what he must realise is inevitable defeat and death.

The owner of a cock may not put him in the ring against his will, because he will not wish to risk his stake on a bird that has not his heart in the business ; but once the bird has been placed in the ring I take it that he cannot be withdrawn, however much he may be suffering, without his owner losing his stake ; and this particular inducement to an owner to show mercy to his bird ends therefore as soon as the cock-fight starts.

Major Jarvis tells us that ' the game-cock if properly bred will never admit defeat, however battered he may be, and he will continue fighting until both birds are so knocked about that both will probably die.' I believe that stags and other male animals at certain seasons will almost certainly fight to the death if placed in a confined space together and no doubt if their horns were tipped with sharp steel spikes they would be able to kill each other more quickly, but is this instinct, which perhaps we all share a little, a fair reason for saying that ' the loser will die the death he has chosen ' and ' would be quite content to die as he has lived,' and are not such statements rather on a par with that pilloried by Major Jarvis at the beginning of his article ' what is more the fox, stag or hare enjoys it as much as anyone.'

Surely the difference between the foxhunter as distinguished from the breeder of horses and hounds and the cock-fighter as dis-

tinguished from the breeder of cocks is that the foxhunter derives his main pleasure from his own ability to ride across country in the wake of fox and hounds taking at least a small risk to life and limb himself while doing so and only incidentally inflicts terror on the hunted fox, while the cock-fighter must derive all his pleasure from seeing the cocks display their gameness in battering each other to death and perhaps incidentally from winning or losing money on the result.

It may be that one day the law will compel those of us who wish to ride across country to follow a drag line only and those of us who wish to exercise our skill in shooting to shoot clay pigeons only and perhaps the law will be right to do so ; but meanwhile it does not seem to me to be fair to say that a man is a hypocrite because he enjoys his day with the foxhounds in spite of the terror which the foxes may suffer by being hunted ; but at the same time will not countenance a cock-fight because he feels that there is no sport in it at all besides the cruelty inflicted on the cocks by the battering they give each other ; and the chance of the betting, the latter an element, by the way, which does not enter either into hunting or covert shooting.

I am, Sir, Yours, etc.,

J. W. St. John Whitehead.

CARNIVAL.

BY BEATRICE WASHBURN.

THE candy-fluff man stood on the corner of Royal and Canal Streets whirling sugar on a stick. The sugar was rose coloured and as lovely to look at as spun glass, but the candy-fluff man did not look at it much. He did not have to, for he could whirl sugar in his sleep. He could spin tops, too, and manipulate little dancing men and balance dancing mice and peddle penny whistles, all the infinitesimal and trivial amusements that catch the passing fancy of the crowd. The fluff man was used to crowds. He had worked for them all his life.

‘You know,’ he said suddenly to the policeman who was standing in front of him to guide the tumultuous vagaries of the Mardi Gras throng, ‘I used to wonder what a town looked like when there wasn’t any crowd. I ain’t never seen one.’

‘Yeah,’ said the policeman vigorously, directing a flock of mermaids and priests, of Mickey Mouses and clowns and monks, ‘I used to wonder that too. But, anyway, they’re all having a good time. That’s something. You don’t have to watch people beating each other up and knifing each other like I do.’

‘No,’ said the candy-fluff man, giving his sugar an extra swing so that it resembled a huge coral-coloured ball. ‘Maybe you’re right, Officer’—and yet, he reflected, looking out over the vast assemblage of court ladies and witches and sailor boys and skeletons and devils and peasant girls, that was what got you sometime. It was all so nutty.

Canal Street roped off as though for a country fair and everyone laughing and shouting as though they were on perpetual holiday. The streets were never normal for a holiday.

One gang was dressed like mermaids in green seaweed and glass beads, a flock of Indians were dancing a war dance in front of his candy machine, a boy dressed in bottle caps was playing 'Whispers in the Dark' on his harmonica, two nuns and a stuffed leopard handed out nickels for some candy fluff. It was a carnival crowd and he was sick of it.

He pulled back his thoughts as though they had been on wires and began swirling the sugar fantasy with both hands, back and forth, like a pattern. They liked that. They were so nutty they liked anything that was different. Dumb. Was there anything so dumb as a carnival crowd, out for a good time, never a thought in the world? What did they have to mask for, anyway? Weren't ordinary clothes good enough for them? Did they have to spend their whole lives dressed up like monks or devils or knights or fairy princesses as he had done? Let them have a thirty-year stretch of show business, with everybody pretending to be somebody else and nothing to it but fake, and they would be mighty glad to cut out all that masking and appear like regular people. Real people, thought the candy man, as he handed a glistening ball to a little boy dressed like a pirate. 'Here you are, sonny, here's a whopper all pink coloured like a rose.'

Real people. Somewhere in the world there must be real people. Not just a lot of monkeys dressed up on sticks. Real people going to work and supporting their families and eating dinner at night with their own wives and kids. Real people who did something beside shout and sing and dance in the streets.

‘I’m doing fine to-day,’ he told the policeman. ‘So many children. And the kids always go strong for spun sugar. But then,’ he added scornfully, ‘crowds is all alike.’

He had learned that secret of his profession. No matter how much people might differ as individuals they were all alike in the mass. He was as much at home in Coney Island as on the pier at Atlantic City, in Venice, California, as at the Texas Centennial, at the state fair in Minnesota as the Carnival season in New Orleans. Crowds were crowds ; he wandered up and down the continent following the street fairs and the circuses and the expositions.

‘If someone was to give me a wish, now,’ he said to the policeman, as the floats toppled by looking like great masses of ice cream and men on stilts with gigantic faces began throwing confetti, ‘do you know what I’d do with it?’

But the policeman wasn’t listening. That was the worst of a crowd. No one ever listened to you. But he went right on with his thoughts the way he was accustomed to do because you can’t bother with what people think of you in this world, particularly when you know they don’t think much. He had long ago given up thinking about it. But, well, if someone was to come down the street now and say, ‘Joe, you can have one wish in all the world. What’ll it be, boy?’

No one would have to ask him that twice. Because his one wish was to find Pauline again, Pauline with the cloudy dark hair and big eyes set wide apart in her face like a baby’s. Pauline, his wife, the girl he had married when they were doing a four a day in Atlantic City and she was the model he threw swords at. It was a good thing when they gave up that act because Joe had about lost his nerve for fear he would actually hit her.

‘Yep, that’s what I’d wish,’ he said aloud, handing a

candy fluff to a fat lady dressed like a gypsy. 'I'd say, if I could only see Pauline again I wouldn't care.'

Just once to see the way she puckered up her mouth when she laughed, and the dimple in her cheeks and the cute way she had of rumpling up his hair when she'd talk to him. That was why he had traversed the continent so many times, back and forth, Bangor to San Diego, Seattle to Palm Beach, little towns in Illinois and Kansas, tank towns where he could trail along after the circus because Pauline had always said that when she gave up vaudeville she was going to get a house in a tank town with a front gate and honeysuckle over the door and make her own apple pies. Pauline was some cook, even in theatrical boarding houses she could do a mean-act with a frying pan so that the Yodelling Boys and the Fat Woman down the hall used to come in for a free handout of her spaghetti and she would laugh and say, 'Go to it, there's plenty more where that came from.'

Pauline didn't look like she ever ate anything herself. She looked like she lived on moonbeams and rose petals, she was that pretty. Everybody said he was lucky to have such a beautiful girl as a partner and then, when they were married, the whole profession envied him.

'You won't keep her long, Joe,' they used to say after the show when they were waiting backstage or had gone across to the corner saloon. 'She's too pretty for the road. Wait till Hollywood sees her.'

Of course they had been right. They had been right from the first. He even knew where the Hollywood scout picked her up. It was while she was doing that mirror turn in the magician act in Salt Lake City. When he had returned to their room that night after the show there was an envelope lying on the bed.

‘ Dear Joe : I’ve gone to Hollywood. Don’t wait for me because I won’t be coming.’

Just that. I’ve gone to Hollywood. He used to wonder about it night after night when he couldn’t sleep and day after day when he couldn’t work because no one would give him a job with Pauline gone. It spoiled his act, they said. Spoiled his act !

If that was all she had done to him. She might as well have stuck a knife into his heart, it would have been quicker, that was all. It wouldn’t have hurt any more and beside when your wife walks out on you it does something to you. You lose your nerve. It wasn’t only that he couldn’t live without her, but it changed something in him, too. You weren’t yourself. You were just a bum. Just a pitiful cheap skate that couldn’t hold a woman’s love.

If I had been the right kind she never would have left me, he often used to think. What made her leave me ? She used to say she loved me. She said it so I almost began to believe it myself. Oh, well, of course, I’m not much. Ugly kind of mug and a skinny little runt at that. No sex appeal. Never knew what to say to a woman. I’m no Clark Gable and I didn’t give her much of a show, either. Couldn’t even take care of her decent. One night stands. Four acts a day, dressed in tights, making her do animal acts with tights when she was a queen, she was. A dream girl that even the talent scouts could spot. Four shows a day when she was so young and lovely. So young and lovely . . .

All of a sudden he saw an empty space in front of his candy stand and realised what had happened. Mustn’t let your thoughts wander in the show business. That’s what happened that first time when he was thinking of Pauline and doing the double somersault on the trapeze and missed

a split second. He had landed in the hospital. Wonder it wasn't the cemetery, but it was only a smashed collar-bone. But after that he wasn't no good at wire work any more. That broken shoulder would be with him all his life.

'Sugar cotton, candy fluff,' he intoned, while his eyes wandered over the huge, milling throng of maskers. 'Buy your candy fluff. Only a nickel, boys and girls—only five pennies. Fresh while you wait.'

Mustn't let yourself get to thinking while you are at work. The crowd can tell every time and they drop off. Carnival crowds don't want nothing to worry them. It seems like they can smell trouble and just keep away from it. The bright sunshine trickled through his thin clothes and made him feel good inside. If only folks would go for this candy stuff he could buy himself a square meal at Mack's place and top it off with a steak. A square meal was something he didn't get enough of. It looked like things got higher every year and travelling was awful steep when you went in the bus or hitch-hiked along the road, hoping some fellow in a car would give you a lift.

'If only I had had money,' he thought wearily, shifting from one tired foot to another, 'maybe I could have held her.'

He edged his way slowly up St. Charles's Street, the centre of the crowd. They were throwing confetti and clashing cymbals, tooting penny horns and singing to the music of the passing bands. Anything to make a noise. Some of them were dancing, wherever there was room, and some were 'trucking' and 'shagging,' or joining hands and rushing through the crowd.

How could they be happy, that is what the fluff man wondered. How can anyone be happy in this cock-eyed world? Or does it help to put on a mask and pretend

you're someone else? Maybe it does at that. Maybe we take ourselves too seriously. Maybe that's how we look to God, just a bunch of nuts dressed up like monkeys and clowns and princesses. Just a crowd of maskers, no one seeing anyone else the way they really are. 'I have enough of people to last the rest of my days,' he thought suddenly, and then he tried to remember places where he had been where there weren't any people. But there were so few of them. It seemed as though he had been born in a crowd and had stayed there all his life.

What a laugh He must get out of it when the party's over and we take off our costumes and show up our real selves.

Even when he was a little boy he had been part of his father's vaudeville team and he used to sleep in a trunk backstage. He hadn't never had any vacation like other kids. His family was always on tour. Why, when he was four years old he did a brother and sister act that knocked them cold in Pittsburg and had them laying in the aisles in Kansas City.

'I was some slicker when I was a kid,' he often used to tell his associates around the bar where they repaired for refreshment after work. 'But the pictures have knocked the stage one in the eye. No future for vaudeville any more.'

His companions agreed with him, though some of the more illustrious ones had gone on to Hollywood and the films. But the fluff man was not illustrious. He was not even able to maintain his standing in his own profession after Pauline had left him so that it was not long before he had taken to selling things in carnival crowds because it was the only thing he knew how to do. His trained seal had grown too old to work and the bicycle act was out on account of vaudeville being taken over by the films and people didn't want to look at acrobats any more.

So he wandered up and down the continent, following the street fairs and the circuses and the expositions. Sometimes he was moved to wonder what a city looked like when it wasn't crowded. But he never knew because he was never there.

'Well, well'—something heavy struck his shoulder—'if it ain't old Joe. Bust my eye if it ain't my old pal of the seal act. Come along and get a drink.'

The face that looked at him was lined and seamed, not with age, for the old pal was still fairly young, but with worry and dissipation. It was the face of a typical showman and it held all the cynical weariness of one who made his living by amusing other people.

'O. K.,' said Joe readily, laying down his huge stick of colour confection and closing up his sugar oven. 'Be glad to.' And he was glad of the opportunity to talk to someone, even if it was old Hoffman who used to be a barker in an animal show. They fought their way through the encircling crowd of Dutch girls and pirates, of monks and Renaissance nobles and fairies and artificial cowboys, to the nearest bar where two Donald Ducks and a stuffed elephant were already standing.

'Where you been?' asked Hoffman, tapping on the counter with a nickel. 'Make it two Scotch.'

'Oh, everywhere,' answered the candy-fluff man vaguely, in answer to the question. 'I got down into Mexico last month. Tia Juana.'

'That so?' said his companion indifferently. 'Them border towns is sure lousy.'

'You've said it,' said the fluff man, draining the small glass of whisky at a gulp. Then came the question he had been dreading.

'Where's Pauline?' Hoffman was calling for another

drink. It seemed as though the monks and pirates and nurses and fairies all stopped a minute to listen for the answer. But, of course, he realised, this could not be true. No one gave a damn about him. No one even knew who he was. Just a candy man. Comes with the carnival. Gone by Ash-Wednesday. Up and down the continent. He follows the crowds.

'We split up,' he said, trying to make it sound casual. 'She's gone out to Hollywood.'

'That so?' Hoffman pushed the other glass towards him. 'Well, let's drink to her, anyway. I thought I saw her picture in the paper yesterday. That is her staying at the hotel, ain't it?'

'Staying at the hotel?' said the candy man stiffly so his mouth wouldn't tremble. 'Keep a stiff upper lip, my boy.' How often his father used to say that to him. 'Pauline staying at the hotel here? You seen her?'

'Well, if it ain't her it's her twin sister,' said Hoffman, beckoning to the bartender. 'Miss Pauline Ardwell staying at the St. Charles's Hotel. Miss Ardwell going to have a part in "Gone with the Wind" or whatever's that new show. Wait a minute. I'll prove it to you. Here, sonny.'

He whistled to a newsboy and gave him a nickel for the fresh edition of the evening paper, splashed with purple and green ink for carnival, full of pictures of floats and maskers and kings and queens. On the second page was one of Pauline. There was no mistaking it. Her eyes looked straight at him and her mouth was puckered into the little smile he knew so well.

He put down his drink suddenly, without tasting it. 'See you later,' he said to Hoffman and stepped out into the throng of dancers. It was like stepping into a running river of sound and colour and sharp waves. The crowds

jostled him, they nudged him, they battered him, for he was a little man. But he did not care. He only wanted to look at the St. Charles's Hotel where Pauline was staying. He only wanted to see her once. Just look at her, feast his thirsty eyes upon her face. He wouldn't bother her none. She wouldn't even know that he was there.

Nor did she. For by some miracle of fate she was standing on the balcony that overlooked the street, just as she used to be, just as though she were still living on rose petals and clouds. She was laughing and talking to the guy beside her and he was a rich guy, you could see that by his clothes. But Pauline had not changed at all, just as lovely, just as slim, her eyes set wide apart like a baby's, just like they used to be. She had on a black velvet dress, that fitted her like she had been poured into it, and a diamond ornament at her throat to hold it together, and a little hat that went up into a peak with a veil on it. She had diamond bracelets on her wrists, too, the kind they used to look at in the ten cent store. Only this kind was real.

He looked and looked at her, but he knew that though she seemed to be gazing straight down at him, that she did not recognise him. How should she when he had on that dirty old coat and torn pants and hadn't had a haircut in a month? She wouldn't expect to see her husband just a tramp down there in the crowd. Just a tramp with only ten bucks between him and starvation. 'What if I was to ask her for fifty dollars so I could get a decent suit and a meal and get on my feet again? Maybe if I was to look like that guy that's with her . . . Oh, God, what's the use. I'm an outsider, that's what. A down and outer. Not in her class. I never was. Just lucky to have her for a few months, like a man might steal a diamond and take it out to look at it.'

Up the street passed a truck-load of maskers, all dressed in orange dominoes with huge white ruffs, all singing, some dancing on the floor of the huge truck on which they rode. They were throwing confetti, screaming with high spirits, driving headlong through the crowd. The milling mob made way for them, dropped back to make a lane for the gigantic vehicle. All but the candy man, who did not stir.

From the hotel balcony arose a shriek, that was equalled only by the pandemonium in the crowd below, who suddenly ceased to dance and sing and began to press backward, in excited circles. The great wheels of the truck were at last motionless, unable to pass a soiled white bundle in their path.

‘Don’t look down, honey,’ begged the well-dressed man on the balcony of the woman in soft velvet and the peaked hat. ‘It’s an accident. Don’t look down. Come on inside and get a drink.’

‘Who was it?’ asked Pauline, she of the wide child-like eyes and the pretty puckered smile, as they made their way into their luxurious suite.

‘Just a candy man,’ said the well-dressed man soothingly. ‘Poor fellow. He never knew what struck him. The truck went so fast.’

But in this he was wrong. For the candy man knew exactly what had struck him. Lying on the ground, surrounded by the horrified maskers, he even heard, away in the distance, the shrill screaming of the ambulance that was to arrive too late. His last conscious thought was that he had asked so little out of life and that in return he had received practically nothing at all. And the last sounds that reached him were those of man’s incredible merriment and gaiety, just as he had been accustomed to hear it all his life.

New Orleans.

BY THE WAY.

'If only Hitler will allow us,' said a wife to her husband the other day, 'we shall have a very happy summer.' That neither of the two were in any sense or degree associated with the surgings of national aggrandisement but were just such simple folk as can be found in their millions throughout this troubled world was proved by her next sentence: 'We'll go out to Kew and do a lot of jolly things like that.' It is surely one of the most imponderable of twentieth-century mysteries that the shadow of international hatred and disaster can be laid by the will of a single man darkly across the paths of remote, individual, and humble felicity: it is this power inherently latent in all dictatorship which must inevitably wither on this earth if freedom is to survive. That at any rate is the major certainty of our civilization.

* * *

And here let us pause briefly to wonder at, even if we cannot quite admire, the mentality that, whilst engaged in decrying its own veracity, expresses in the very same utterance an expectation of being still believed.

* * *

It seems as though the well-known British habit of understatement is hardly even yet understood by our Continental friends: talking recently to some visitors from Central Europe, I found them quite ingenuously convinced of the immunity in the event of war of the Italian Navy. It is to be as much presumed as hoped that Signor Mussolini

is far too well informed to share so pleasant—and for him so disastrous—an illusion.

★ ★ ★

‘We live,’ wrote a certain gentleman named William Wordsworth, ‘by admiration, hope, and love.’ Doubts occasionally cross the mind in these stirring days whether that saying is entirely true : by hope certainly, but there is a query about the admiration as about the love. For my own part I could do with a little less news from abroad.

★ ★ ★

A number of men were discussing the Prime Minister’s admirable speech at the recent Anniversary Dinner of the Royal Literary Fund, particularly that delightful passage in which he declared that the one bone he wanted to pick with dictators was that they left him no time for reading ; as soon as ever he took up a novel a secretary rushed in crying ‘Sir, he’s done it again !’ One of the company was a distinguished historian : he was appealed to to say if in his studies he had ever come across the case of a dictator who was also the possessor of a sense of humour : after thought, and with some diffidence, he could produce only the dying words of Vespasian—it was at once pointed out that if a dictator had to wait to be humorous till he was dying he could not be allowed to count. It was accordingly agreed, *nem. con.*, that dictatorship and humour were incompatible.

★ ★ ★

Travel books are of many kinds and, in this age when no part of the world is far from any other, are many in number : one that is good to read must first of all be written interestingly and secondly gains in accordance with the intrinsic interest of the places visited ; in the few cases where both requirements are met the result is always a

delight—but those cases are few, for though many travel and nearly all who travel write, the combination of the good traveller and the good writer is rare. To-day it is more often than not found in a woman and a young one : there are several notable examples and now Audrey Harris must be added to the list. She has undeniably and admirably fulfilled both requirements in *Eastern Visas* (Colling, 12s. 6d. n.) in which she journeys alone through Russia, Korea, China, Japan, India, Tibet, Afghanistan and elsewhere : she states at the outset that ‘her intention is to put herself back into each stage of the journey as she lived it at the time’—which shows at once that she has the intention which can best preserve freshness ; it is less easy to agree with her ‘I am an ordinary person’ : for hers was no ordinary journey and the result is no ordinary book. As Miss Harris is both young and ‘nomadic by temperament’ we may look forward with pleasure to many another from her pen.

* * *

Poetry doubtless needs defence in these days which are so inimical to all but destruction, and it was therefore fitting that a book should be published entitled *The Poet's Defence* (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d. n.), and yet the author, Dr. J. Bronowski, though he has much to say which is refreshingly provocative, has to some extent unduly loaded the dice against himself. His purpose is, so it is declared, to take ‘established poets,’ but he begins with Philip Sidney whose fame, so he himself states, ‘is not the fame of a poet’ and he ends with A. E. Housman and W. B. Yeats, whose works are too recent to enable us to say they are ‘established’ : moreover, Dr. Bronowski dismisses them both and also Swinburne as follows : Swinburne is ‘a disorderly and a wasted poet and Housman was so thin and silly that he

can hardly be called a poet' whilst 'Yeats is a poet great enough to stand against poetry'—which is the concluding dictum of a puzzling book. But it will interest and amuse even if it does not persuade.

* * *

It is one of the truly suggestive things about life that in many cases people are at least as interesting for those experiences which meant most to them as for those for which they are remembered. Until now no one has troubled to write a life of *Captain Marryat* (Longmans, 15s. n.); no one before Christopher Lloyd has thought it worth while to record his exploits as a naval officer, a man of quick temper and quarrels, restless and rash, but always very much alive, who was 38 years of age when he retired and turned to the writing by which alone his name is now known. It is a biography deserving of rescue from oblivion, and in it Mr. Lloyd well justifies his aim 'to explore, through the career of the man who was chiefly responsible for building up the priceless legend of the old Navy, the fascinating period which lies between 1806 and 1830.' And vividly he establishes that writers of children's books are by no means necessarily made of milk and water!

* * *

Owing solely to the accident of dates, my *Last of the English* being published on May 2 and Mr. James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* on May 4, I have had the interesting and novel experience of finding my name coupled briefly with his in a literary paragraph. I make the prediction (entirely altruistically) that his work will achieve a wider publicity than mine—the question of endurance not being raised—for it is at present a mad universe where extremes are popular and he will no doubt have his reward. Some years ago I spent a good many hours trying conscientiously to find either

coherence, purpose, or sense in *Ulysses*, but finally was compelled to reject the book as the nastiest trash offered in recent times to a gullible world. I do not therefore propose to waste either time or money upon *Finnegans Wake*: its language has been called 'trenchant' and its purpose 'sincere'—this in a preliminary note and published in an eminent paper which quoted the first and last paragraphs of this much-advertised work, it is only necessary to add that neither obey any known rules of either sanity or grammar. It is a hard saying but obviously a true one that every age gets the literature it deserves.

* * *

Much has been written about Byron and his loves and yet, strange enough, it seems that there is always something more to be written: nor has R. Glyn Grylls, who wrote so good a biography of Mary Shelley, exhausted the interest of one of the most singular of menages: in her new biography she traces these events anew from the angle of *Claire Clairmont* (Murray, 10s. 6d. n.), a beautifully produced, vivacious and authoritative account of Allegra's mother, one who loved not wisely but too well and, though living to the age of ninety-one, had long since thanked God she could never be young again.

* * *

Of another great man, of a very different type to either poet, much has also been written, but it is good that Muriel Wellesley should complete her previous study of her great-grand-uncle by presenting now *Wellington in Civil Life* (Constable, 18s. n.): she is truly able to justify the rest of her title 'through the eyes of those who knew him,' and she is eminently successful in portraying him as a 'much more human, much more lovable figure than the Iron Duke has often been thought to have been. This volume which,

continuing the last, takes him from 1818 to his honoured death is full of good things, some of which have a bearing upon to-day, as for example the Duke's words in a debate in 1838 : ' My Lords, I entreat you and I entreat the Government not to forget that a great country like this can have no such thing as a little war. They must understand that, if they enter on these operations, they must do it on such a scale, and in such a manner, and with such determination . . . as to make it quite certain that those operations will succeed.'

* * *

If one may judge from what her publishers picturesquely call her ' march of crime,' that is to say, the succession of her four previous detective stories, it is highly improbable that Miss Josephine Bell is ever likely to write a bad one, but obviously it is difficult, if not impossible, for any writer always to write one equal to his, or her, best. *Death at Half-Term* (Longmans, 7s. 6d. n.) is therefore good, but one would be doing Miss Bell's undoubtedly high powers less than justice if one were to describe it as quite up to the standard, let us say, of either of her last two. Dramatic as it finally comes to be, excellent as is the ingenuity, and eminently effective as is the running contrast between the grimness of murder and the interested chatter of the schoolboys who appoint themselves, as far as they may, as sleuths, still there are too many characters about whose fates the reader is indifferent for the story to be really exciting. And light-heartedly as murder often is committed, in fiction, nevertheless, I for one found it rather hard to credit its commission as herein revealed. Yet all the same a clever, well-told, well-constructed murder, over which an hour or two may be agreeably spent.

. G.

THE ' CORNHILL ' COMPETITION.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 188.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 30th June.

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with —— and with ——.

1. Sylvan historian, who canst —— express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
2. To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n —— divine !
3. —— swike thou never nu.
4. There's not a budding boy or —— this day
But is got up and gone to bring in May.
5. Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
——'d by the coil of his crystalline streams,
6. Hark, 'tis the sparrow's good-night twitter
About your cottage —— !

Answer to Acrostic 186, April number : ' Nor *lowly* hedge nor solitary thorn ' (Thomas Hood : ' Autumn '). 1. *LietH* (Bret Harte : ' What the bullet sang '). 2. *OnE* (William Cory : ' Mimmernus in Church '). 3. *World* (Browning : ' Parting at Morning '). 4. *Letting* (Sir Samuel Ferguson's ' Ceann Dubh Deelish '). 5. *YE* (Peacock : ' Three Men of Gotham ').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss E. Dawdeswell, St. Anne's, Verwood, Wimborne, Dorset, and Miss Rosa G. Perry, Beechen Green, Aughton, Ormskirk, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*